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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

COMPILED FROM THE PAPERS AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE PORTRAITS AT CLAYDON HOUSE BY

FRANCES PARTHENOPE VERNEY
AND
MARGARET M. VERNEY

V.2, pl. 1

THE GARDEN *(From a Sketch by F. P. Lady Verney)*

'more yet of this,
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast'

THIRD EDITION

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

VOL. II.

Verney 1972

Sir Peter Lely

SIR RALPH VERNEY, BART.

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MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

CHAPTER XXXV.

SIR RALPH CROSSES CROMWELL'S PATH.

1654–1655.

Sir Ralph felt but little sympathy with the members whom Cromwell ejected from the House of Commons in April 1653; he had neither forgiven nor forgotten his own expulsion—indeed the Long Parliament, which he and his father had entered with such high hopes in 1640, had dwindled to a remnant 'there were none to praise, and very few to love.'

England was divided into eleven districts under as many major-generals, who exercised police jurisdiction and levied a 10-per-cent. tax on the fortunes of all who had served the King, to pay the expenses of keeping order. Bucks was under the command of the 'Lord Deputy' Charles Fleetwood. Sir Ralph writes: 'I confess I love Old England very well, but as things are carried heere the gentry cannot joy much to bee in it.' Colonel Henry Verney's letters are a curious contrast to his brother's: 'the gentry' that he lived amongst cared little for politics, but endeavoured by hunting, racing, and gambling to relieve the dulness of the Puritan rule; Cromwell's son and son-in-law seem to have been amongst them. Henry is visiting 'my Lady Cuttings at Tustinge,' and at 'Sir Richard Shugboroughs, a good friend's house.' He writes to his brother from

Feb. 1655 'Thrusten': 'I cannot send you any newse, more then what company came here, the last night unexpected, to hunt the fox for a weeke. My Lord Cro'well [Richard Cromwell?], my Lord Claypole, my Lord Sands, my Lord Deleware, Sir William Kingsmill, Sir Hue Middleton, and divers other gentlemen. It is soe darke that I cannot see to write a word more, then to tell you, wee keepe ill hours, and lead a lude life, which is noe way pleasinge to me.'

April 2, 1655. 'Tell Harry,' writes Dr. Denton, 'he had better keepe his money and lay it out on some of my Lord Duke [of Richmond]'s horses, then loose it to fooles and bunglers.'

Aug. 13, 1665. 'I have bine att Stowe neere this weeke, and have waighted on S^r^ Richard daley to the forrest, and had good sport, but ill fortune with my dogg Hector, for the first course a did run their, a was spoyld in a battle with a bucke, never dogg gott more credit, the combate held neare halfe an hower, afore 20 of us, and all we could doe, could neither save dog nor kill the deare, though wee had severall times hold of him, it was forty to one I had not let out S^r^ Richards gutts, loosinge his hold att his hornes, my lord Claypoll seeinge the mettle & greate couradge the dog had after receivinge five stuck deepe wounds, would not bee deney'd the dog to breede one, soe, much against my will, I was forst to present him, by his lordship's surgons greate care the dog may live to run againe, his greateness is more fond of him than ever I was, which does not a little please me.' Three weeks later he writes again: 'Our huntinge att the forrest is now done, and his lordshipp gone, and my dogg Hector like to doe well again, S^r^ William Farmer att the killinge of his three staggs entertainde the whole company for tow dayes noblely, I dare say it cost him att the lest £100. . . . My cousin Smith treated his honour att a dinner hansomely; feastinge of late I have had plentifully but never hartely merey for want of your company.' Aunt Isham, though she dearly loves a little gambling, is quite worn out; Henry made them so late every night at Hillesden; 'he will never give one over as Longe as one is able to sit up.' Sir Ralph had presented her with 'a paire of sable

Brasletts, for you may weare them at Play, which you cannot doe your muffe, and these may possibly save you from many colds this winter.'

Sir Ralph was in more congenial society: he paid a quiet visit to his devoted friends Vere, Lady Gawdy, and Dorothy Leeke, who was installed as her companion, at Croweshall. He and Sir Nathaniel Hobart travelled back together and had many misadventures by the way, but as Sir Nathaniel has sent 'the whole story to my Lady,' writes Sir Ralph to Doll, 'for me to undertake it after him, were farre worse then to write Myrza after Denham.' Aug. 1654.

Sweet Doll, to whom Claydon had been such a happy home in the old days, might not have been unwilling to fill the vacant chair on the other side the fire. They were on the old happy terms of intimacy, but Sir Ralph's letters probably meant more to the woman who received them than to the man who wrote them, and through all her banter there runs a vein of tender and pathetic sentiment. 'If I could quarrel with you for anything,' he wrote to her after his visit to Croweshall, 'it should bee for the compliments in your letter. I thought you had knowne me and loved me better, than to use me with soe much cerimony. I pray let your next bee in a more friendly straine.' ''Tis now the new fashion for Maydens in town to ride a Pick Pack; you ever loved to follow the mode. I wish you would try it now to Claydon or if you like any other way better take your owne choyce, please your selfe, for soe you come, you shall most certainly please mee.' 'I know your old deare friend Mr. London findes you such a variety of entertainements that you have not leasure to cast your thoughts on Claydon, but least I should be quite forgot, give these lines leave to visit you in my absence.' May 31, 1655. Jan. 27, 1656.

'Consider what you have lost,' Doll writes of the marriage of an heiress, 'for not asking the question . . . but you are difficult to be plesed and it must be half don before you speak, I pray let me court your mistres (I will make a journy a pourpos) I know your yumur so well, that I have no fear but to pleas you . . . you could not have spent your April 23, 1656.

time more charitably if I may be your judg, then in righting a letter of so much variety to me, it hath much revived my sperits, the lose of your company & the rest of my frinds hath made me to retire into my self, thus I have spent much of my time in thought . . . but I resolve to forget you all & get out of this ugly yumur, for fear I grow lean. The hope of Aunt Verney's legesy made me think of an other jorney to Loundon, that I might spend it hansomly, but sene she meanes to live, I am not without fear that you may supplant me in hir favor.'

April 28, 1656. 'Sweet Cozen,' he replies, 'your request is granted, when I come at a Mistris, you shall court her for me; noe person that I know can doe it with more addresse & cuning, and I am sure you love your friendes so well, that (haveing undertaken it) you will performe it with noe less fidelity then affection. But, alas, the maine thing, A Mistris is yet wanting, I have been fumbling soe many yeares with soe ill successe, that unlesse you find one out, I am not like to speed in that; therfore I pray thinke well of it, and assure your selfe, if she bee but rich enough, & old enough she canot but bee wise enough and good enough for me.'

Doll pays him back his jest with spirit. 'The character you have given me of your Mistris, assures me that you will not ingadj me, only you resovle to be sivell, and I will be so to; and leave you to your one chois, with this wish that you may be as happi as you deserve.' If the adjective 'rich' seemed purposely to exclude herself, Doll had at least the consolation of seeing that the wealthy and charming widow Dame Vere Gawdy did not advance a step nearer to the position which, as her friends believed, she also felt herself eminently qualified to adorn.

Sir Ralph's most finished and elaborate compliments are reserved for his letters to Lady Gawdy, and she is not to be outdone in civilities, though she may lament that she can only express herself 'so exactly like a Suffolke Cloune . . . yet in my harte,' she says, 'you shall bee treated as I would bee in heaven.' Her love of building makes Croweshall 'as durty as Claydon without dors,' and Doll assures Sir Ralph

VERE, LADY GAWDY

that he may fancy himself 'at home in earnest'; he sends Lady Gawdy all kinds of plants, from watercress to 'cedar berries,' hoping she may live to see the cedars out-top her tallest oaks. 'If they do not prosper,' she writes, 'they will miss of so grateful a soil as the heart of your obleged humble sarvant.'

Many merry letters passed between them on the subject of Lady Gawdy's fortune and her expectations. 'Madame, give me leave I beseech you, to give you joy of the greate Wealth thats coming towards you; in earnest you are now thought one of the Richest Widdowes in England, for since the Death of Lady Clerke, we heare Mrs. Daniell hath publiquely declared she hath none but you and Yours to care for. Were I now at Liberty I would make suite to bee your cash keeper, however if your Baggs are rotten with rusty gold or not bigg enough to hold it all, let me but know it, and a Dozen or two of Leather Meale Baggs shall be immediately provided and sent downe by Madame y^r^ humble servant R. V.' Sept. 3, 1655

'Sir,' replies the lady, 'I doe experiment the fallshood of fame severely, for if the kindness of the parson did answer the report, twould bee noe difficulty to inclose my welth in the crasiest bags I have, & if it were exposed to vew I should not neede a gaurd to secure it; the esteme of my freinds is A welth I only covitt, and your selfe may assure a most vallewable share of it to Sir, Your most obleged sarvant, Vere Gawdy.'

There was a report that Sir Ralph had been arrested, and Dr. Denton writes: 'This is to lett you know that you are in the tower, gett out as well as you can, Verney for Vernham hath caused the rumor & mistake.' 'Here is newes more than is true in abundance. That that is most generally received is that S^r^ Joseph Wagstaffe cum multis aliis is up in the West, seized Judge Rolls & others & all theire horses & money at Salisbury. That S^r^ Richard Mauleverer is upp in the north & endeavoured the seizinge of York Castle etc. There is much talking of risinge in divers other countries, w^ch^ I had rather beleeve then goe to see. . . . I ghesse there will be a generall settlement of the Jan. 18, 1655. March 15 and 17, 1655.

militia in all counties, & a generall securinge, & though I dare be a compurgator for Claydon & Hillesdon & Ratley that you have neyther head nor purse in the rebellions designe, yett the names are malignant & that will goe far in prudence.'

In the midst of these public anxieties the trees that Sir Ralph had ordered from Holland kept arriving, much bruised in the packing; but Dr. Denton hopes 'the Abele Trees will make him an amends.' Their arrival at Claydon is delayed, and Sir Ralph writes: 'The advertisement came in pudding-time,[1] for to morrow the cart was to set forwards but upon this I have stayed it till Monday.'

Many of Sir Ralph's friends were supporting the Government: Fiennes had been made Lord Keeper, Sir Roger wished for a place as Groom of the Stole, Nat. Hobart was hoping for a Mastership in Chancery, and Sir Richard Temple for a place in the 'Protector's Court.' He also talked of going to Jamaica, but this came to nothing, as Dr. Denton had foreseen. 'Sir Rich: Temple's purport of goinge for gold is 1,000 times bettar than holdinge of a trenchar, but I doubt he loves sleepinge in a whole skin to well to goe that iourney.'

Penelope Denton was in bitter trouble. A law-suit was pending between her husband and his mother. Sir Ralph took infinite trouble about it, for Pen's sake only, as he thought 'The Squire' 'a beast.' In March John Denton is

March 16, 1655. in prison in Oxford Castle for debt, and Pen is 'almost brought to deths dore: . . . this 3 days I have not eate more then a mess of milk & a negg; my one seller beare is to strong for me to drink. I must sell myself to my sking, goods & all to defray this great chargis.' . . . 'The sheriff & gaolers' fees cost 8 or 10*l.* & their 2 cows have to be sold.'

April 6, 1655. 'Brother no creatur that beggs from dore to dore can live in A mener condishtion then I do. Had my Good father or mother A lived I am confident it would A greved there harts to a sene or hard of my greate strats.'

[1] *I.e.* in the nick of time.

'When George in pudding-time came o'er
And moderate men looked big.'—*The Vicar of Bray.*

A man-servant of John Denton's was 'a great vilin,' Pen writes, '& had sayd that of me to his master that he could not mak good. The good lady at Ditchley & Sir Harry & his Lady was with me when I was ill, & I did one [own] soe much trouble to my Lady, which was no more then my looks did betray me in; that both herself & Sir Harry did tak upon them to tell my husband that if he did not kick the fellow out of dors, no gentilman but would scorne to keep him company, thos words of those parsons did work so much upon my husband that with my paying him his hold years wages, I thank God he is gon from us both.'

While Sir Ralph was about Pen's affairs an urgent request came from Cary that he would stand godfather to an expected baby, early in April, as she would 'unwillingly kepe a child long unbaptized.' John Stewkeley, who desired a man's society during his 'gander-month,' wrote heartlessly. 'S^{r}, My Lady. . . . & I are ambitious of y^{r} Company here this spring, that you may observe the melody her crying out, & the singing of the Nitingale will make together . . . shee will earnestly expect your coming, which will bee noe less acceptable to her then the midwife; I desire you would bring my namesake, the Winton Scholler [his own boy] will bee proud of his aquaintance. If you have not better Conveniency, here are choice of Coaches now, for the South hampton Coachman hath sett up another one wth 6 horses, by Hoburn bridge, at the Rose or King's Armes . . . there is another sett up lately in Winchester.' Sir Ralph promised to be with them, but when John Stewkeley wrote to announce the birth of a girl, 'which after 2 boyes is very acceptable,' he was still detained by the Dentons' lawsuit. 'One side is soe needy that a little will not serve theire turne; & the other side is so hide bound that they will part with nothing thats considerable. Pen is soe importunate & passionate for my stay, that I know not how to leave her at this nick of time,' wrote Sir Ralph, willing to disoblige the sister he loved best, rather than abandon the one most uncongenial to him, in her time of need. He therefore appealed to Aunt Isham at Preshaw to be his proxy. 'Heertofore

Feb. 26, 1655.

May 18, 1655.

you know you have worne Breeches for mee, & now if you please to put them on againe & christen my little neece, I
May 23, 1655. shall take it for a very greate favour.' 'All though I be not so youthfull as I was hearetofor,' she replied, 'to put one Briches, yett I have my Husbonde heare as shall be att youre sarvis, and this will be the seconde time as he is to Ancere for you & you can doe noe lese then say as the Papeses used to say to one the other: Say so many Prayeres for me today, & I will say as many for you tomorroe.' She pretends to think that another cause keeps him in town, and John Stewkeley overwhelms him with playful reproaches and is no longer his 'passionately affectionate, but his affectionately passionate, brother & servt.'

Sir Ralph had sufficient sense of humour to enjoy his own jokes, but it seldom reached to those of other people. He was detained in town partly by Cary's own affairs, for he was trying to get the jointure to which she was entitled from Cuddesdon out of her mother-in-law, old Lady Gardiner, almost as tough a customer as the Denton dowager. He was tired and harassed; their raillery about 'rich fluttering widows' seemed very ill-timed, and he wrote back with less
May 25, 1655. than his usual courtesy and sweet temper. 'I thought it utterly impossible my kindnesse, charity & honour should all be caled in question for doeing that which (being well considered) could neither in kindnesse, charity nor honour bee well declined. . . . I shall take heed how I engage myselfe in any businesse but my owne: & therefore I have now sent all the Papers about Cudsdon to the Sollicitour . . . least if heerafter any other sister should send for mee, I might not bee at Liberty to attend, & therby (though very undeservedly) occation a new action of unkindnesse to be brought against me.' Happily, he was too much beloved at Preshaw for his letter to give offence. John Stewkeley apologised handsomely, and said that 'his wife's grief had been such that a gentlewoman told him . . . that of her knowledge a Lady died of noe other sickness.'

The plots and the arrests continued; Mrs. Isham writes:
June 1655. 'Moste of our Gentre is secured and took to Oxford. Sr

Jhon: Bire Lase [Borlase], Lord Loues [?], Lord Folkle· [? Falkland] att Ox. all: ; Lorde Linesay thay have bine with, but the Lorde Camdine comeing a suter to his Dafter he is Lett alone a while, and whate to thinke of my Hus: I knowe not, Nothing they can have against him I knowe and wheather I had best sende him out of the way I know not, for none knowes whate these be had away for, itt may be all your cases. . . . My cays be all loste & I have no more paper.'

Mun, having wound up with Dr. Creighton, is at the Hague, with good introductions, but is clamouring to return to England, feeling himself quite a stranger there. Sir Ralph answers him in a severe mood. 'I have now received yours & in it a direction for my letters to you, but soe lame & soe ill English & nonesence that I am ashamed to write it. "For Mr Edmund Verney at Mr Bates in the signe of the Samson in die Pots in den Hagh." You should have said "At Mr Bates his House or Shopp or Lodging," or some such like place, or tis not good English. Secondly In the signe of the Sampson is nonsence, it should have beene At the Signe; your very French Phrase might teach you to write better sence, and English too, but that you are soe carelesse that you minde nothing. Tis noe less a wonder then a trouble to me to see that at neare nineteen yeares of age (though noe care, nor cost hath beene wanting for your Breeding) you are not yet able to write a superscription of a letter. For shame, bee not still thus childish. . . . You are very much obliged to Sr Charles Cotterell for assisting you in buying your things: I hope you will bee advised by him, & endeavour to imitate him, for hee is a very sober discrett person.' June 11, 1655.

Two days after this precise letter was penned, in the midst of his quiet and useful life at Claydon, Sir Ralph was suddenly arrested, on June 13, 1655, by the Lord Protector's soldiers, as a suspected Royalist. His next letter to Edmund tells the story:—'Yours of $\frac{18}{8}$ June I received this very evening at London being just now brought Prisoner to Towne with divers Lords and other persons of quallity, for June 15, 1655.

wee know not what; our owne innocence is a Protection that canot be taken from us; had you been heere, you had certainly beene in Prison too, for they tooke both father and sonn in many places, and though I must confesse the Soldiers that tooke me at Claydon on Wednesday last, used me very civilly, yet they tooke all the Pistolls, & Swords in the house, & carried me to Northampton that very night, and the next morning (though 'twas a fast [1]) made us goe to Brickill, & this night they brought us heather. What shall be donn with us, and that multitude of Gentry that is secured in every county, wee canot yet imagen, but I am glad with all my hart you were not heere, for you are yet unacquainted with the great charge, trouble, and inconveniences of a Prison, and I hope the times will grow so quiet that you may enjoy your freedome better then wee have donn. I pray husband your money as well as possibly you can, for these are not only very troublesome, but chargable times, and though I am willing to suffer first, yet if this contineu, you must thinke to suffer too.'

June 18, 1655

The shock was great to every one at Claydon. Will Roades tried to get another interview with his master. 'I was at Northamton, but cam to late to speak with you there,' he writes, 'but I hop in God to see your Saffe Return, and for afflicktions whille we live in this vaille of miserey must continually be loocked for, but yf you souffer afflicktions heere for Righteousness saike, hapy are you in your sufferings; but I hop you shall have no cause but however it shall be, the hartie prayer of your humble servant to allmightie god to give you a strong faith in Jesus Christ which is not worthy to be compared to any tribulations heere, for a good conscience is a conteniall feast which I doubt not of in you, so I pray god bless you & yours.' This devout letter was followed by more earthly consolations in the form of a venison pasty. 'If it plese god I should a ben happie to have seen you Eate part of it at Claydon.'

June 22, 1655.

Sir Ralph wrote to Mun again from 'St. James His

[1] Probably the day of intercession for the persecuted Protestants of Piedmont.

house. Childe, The letter I writ you on Friday last will fully informe you of my being brought Prisoner to London. That night late many were committed to the Gatehouse, & the next morning at least eleven more of us were comitted to Lambeth House, & that very afternoone my selfe with divers others were committed to this place, where every man hath a guard uppon him day & night, but wee are not kept upp close nor are our friends kept from us, I thanke god I am in good aire & good health & my innocency keepes me cheerfull.'

Letters of condolence poured in and good wishes for his 'Inlargement.' Mrs. Isham writes: 'With great joie did I receive your leter, for the D^r^ rit soe dolfuley to me, that I could naither eaght, Drinke nor Sleepe the night I herd of it. . . . I am confident that you air tow Discrate as to have had a hand in the last rising.' Doll Leeke is full of sympathy; but 'my dispairing nature is apt to fear the worst, my sister givs me some hope of your relese.' Lady Gawdy wishes that his 'offence against the State, had merited so ill a goale as Croweshall.' He writes to her cheerfully: 'I doubt not but you have heard how highly the Protector hath obleiged me, in sending for me from my owne cottage to lodge me in his owne Pallase, & presently put me into a condition to keepe a Guard both day & night, w^ch^ is usuall to none but Princes, & all this without my seeking I assure you; & for ought I know (if I behave my selfe well) hee may probably exalt mee somewhat 8 or 10 Rounds Higher too.' Sir Roger writes in answer to such another letter: 'I had much rather seen you in my poore Cottage then to have heard of you in a pallace. . . . I am glad it is no worse since it is no better with you, and that you have wipt off that dirty & wett journey so fairely without prejudice to yo^r^ health. Its well you are so merry, I am sure yo^r^ letter was read with sober sadness in so much that it begott my wife a fitt of trembling in hir heart, which shee is too subject upon all such occasions. When I heare you are free you shall heare more from me, but I pray know, that I will have nothing to doe with any prisoner of that nature, till he hath

June 20, 1655.

June 25, 1655.

June 24, 1655.

clear'd himself before my L^d^, therefore as you would avoyd my censure, acquitt yo^r^ self like an honest man, and then my hermitage will be the fitter to receive you.'

Sir Ralph was in pain with a shoulder he had put out some years before; the anxieties and 'inconveniences' of his confinement were affecting his spirits, and he was obliged to employ Robin Kibble, a drunken and careless servant, to write for him. He replied to his old friend with considerable irritation from 'S^t^ James his House,' taking seriously Sir Roger's joke, that he must clear his character as a malignant before he could be received at Wroxall.

Trusty Roger was quite upset at the least threatened interruption of a friendship that had stood the test of such dark and difficult years. He hastens to reply. 'Had my last letter been intercepted and so interpreted by one of the new gang, I should have pass't it over with a pleasant smile; but that Sr. R. V. could finde in his heart to make so unkinde a construction of it, the test of a whole synod could not have gained my beliefe, had I not his owne hand for it. I see I must heerafter endeavor to be merry and wise, and to weigh my words before they are sent abroad, least they be found too light: it had not been the first time if you had suffered my folly in that kinde with a great deale of candor, and that now a little jesting should prove sufficient to render me an unworthy clown, by an implicit prohibiting you my house as it were, under the notion of a timerous distemper that of late hath seised upon me, of entertaining such as you are. Let me tell you that I never was in love with the name of Malignant nor any that in earnest did mention it, but heerafter I shall dread & avoyd it for my own part, as I would the taking of a beare by the tooth. I am not willing to dwell upon this ungrateful subject but rather believe that St. James indited your letter & you were only the scribe. But is it possible that any expression that fell from my pen, should alter the resolution of Sir R. V.? I have alwaies thought him as fixed as the earth, but I shall lay the whole blame upon my self. All this to St. James—as for yourself I wish you at liberty & in no worse place then I am in my

July 9, 1655.

self. . . . Your most affectionate and discomposed friend and servant.'

But before the soft answer came Sir Ralph had forgotten that there was any cause of offence. 'Certainly either you or I or both of us,' he wrote, 'are grown notable Drunkards, & know not what wee write. What could you take ill in my last letter that you should thus chide me? I will not chide again, the Victory shall be yours, for you have soe longe & often obleiged me, that you may now use me as you list. I could finde in my hart to breake prison to cleare this Cloud, but not being conscious of ever writing, speaking, or soe much as thinking anything to your prejudice, I know (according to your old rules of kindnesse & justice) you will doe me that right as to esteeme me still your faithfull friend & servant, R. V.' July 12, 1655. 'Whether I was drunk or madd it matters not,' Sir Roger rejoined, 'if I were mistaken I am glad, and shall be as willing to eate my words as my meat when I am hungry.' July 16, 1655. Sir Ralph retorts that if he misunderstands him again he will get him 'a home in Bedlam or at least in this place, where for ought I see, you may have leasure enough to coole both your heeles and your head too, for wee heare no newes of our Enlargement: yet some few of us with greate struggling & solicitations have gotten leave to goe home, but soe bound & fetterd, that most of us had much rather remain heere as wee are, then returne to our owne houses with such shackels on our persons, & our Fortunes too. . . . You will not be satisfied unless I spend the summer with you, but alas Sir that's already gon, this 5 weekes imprisonment hath almost eaten up the summer quarter . . . all that I can say more is that when the Protector hath donn with mee and that you are alone att Wroxall you may freely dispose of me.' July 19, 1655.

Sir Ralph's friends were working for his release. There is a copy of a letter from Colonel Thomas Hammond to a person in authority unnamed: 'Our ould acquintance makes me write to you about a cosen of my wife's, S[r] Ralfe Verny, intreating you to stand his friend; he has by a mistake (I am confident) been delivered to you as a delinquent. He

was sitting in the Parlement-house when his father was killed at Edgehill, & sent in volentaryly two horses into the Parlements army, tis true in the yeare 1643 he went beyond sea, it was for his wife's health, who about 3 or 4 yeares after dyed there, & he returned not long after for England Now you know as much as I, I am confident you will be as tender in oppressing one well affected, as just against a malignant, I am far from pleading for a malignant, we in Surry if men testify ther good affections (though malignants before) by our Commission are directed to spare them, I leave all this with you knowing you will proceed in righteousnesse.'

July 4, 1655. Doll Leeke writes: 'O that Saint James stood by Croshall wood, I then wold have a care of you myself; it is possible I might be as great a vexasion to you as your jalor, but it should be performed with so much kindness that in charity you would bear with me. . . . I hear some are relest and I beleve you have many frinds that wold interest them selfs for you, and prevaill I am confident, I pray stand not to much upon your puntillios for ther is nothing now but self intrest to be preferd: thay say you will have no body medell in this affair; I hope it is an alterable resolution.' She begs him to have a doctor's advice, and gives her own. 'I am confident baithing in milk & water wold do you good; I mean a generall bath, not only your arm . . . I fear you vex yourself, but dear cosen let not your enemies have that advantage over you, for if you weer all destroyed it wold be a pleasure to them; therefore I beg of you to resolve to be mery & to make much of yourself.' Aunt Sherard's stumbling pen hopes that 'as you waier tacken off sodin, you will be relesed of A sodin tow.' John Stewkeley writes his kind inquiries. 'The messenger came a Coachman, but returns Postillion and is upon the spurr.' Sir Ralph replies: 'Wee that are restrayned have no present hope to enjoy our owne Houses in hast, patience is an excellent Vertue & our new masters are resolved to see how large a proportion wee have of it.'

July 26 1655.

July 30 1657. Sir Ralph writes to Lady Gawdy: 'I am very much

joyed at Sir Francis Coke's enlargment tis a good president for all we Prisoners to urge to our new masters, when the right plannet reigneth we shall get out . . . tis generally beeleeved the greate and unexpected blow given to the Fleet in the Indies (which is like to bee the Losse of that designe) will put them to soe greate straights for money that their necessities (though not our guilt) will oblidge them to use the greater severities towards the Cavalier Party, to whome they attribute all their misfortunes, but with what justice this can bee layd unto theire charge is beyond my apprehension.' To Doll Leeke he writes: 'I knew that Sir Ed: Syd[enham] (with the helpe of Coll: Coke) procured that favour for Sir Francis, but I have noe reason to expect the like, for since my being seized the Collonell hath beene soe strangly shie of mee, that some have woondered at it, & yett I doe not know, that ever in this or any other thing, I oppressed him with the least of my concernes.'

Mun is sick of the Low Countries; 'j'ai assez veu de ces pais icy, je ne m'en soucie plus'; if he may not come home he would go to Heidelberg and study mathematics and German; there is good society there. Sir Ralph hopes to obtain leave to travel, when he might meet Mun abroad; but this is doubtful 'unlesse it bee to the Spaw, or some other Waters, & thats usually granted but for 3 or 6 months at most.' He is not anxious for Mun's return on account of the 'strange life our youth now lead for want of a Court and Playes to entertaine them.' 'Mun confesseth to me hee hath scarse looked at a Booke since his coming from Utrecht, if hee hath neglected his exercizes as much, I beeleeve hee may come home & keepe sheep for hee will bee fit for little else . . . he hath a greate aversion to the Court and dancing.' July 13, 1655.

The much abused Mun asks for 150 yards of black ribbon to trim a grey and black cloth doublet, which will make a proper attire with scarlet silk stockings, or with black, if his father prefers them; as if a 'nice' fancy in stockings would be likely to appeal to him in 'St. James his

house'; he also requires some Cordovan gloves. Sir Ralph thinks the quantity of ribbon excessive: 'so a suite bee whole, cleane, & fashionable I care not how plaine it bee.' Later in the autumn Mun complains of the unhealthiness of the Hague, which he says has never suited him, but it is too late to think of moving now, 'car j'ai achepté du tourfe pour me servir tout l'hiver.'

Nov. 23, 1655.

Mr. William Gee and his wife had ventured back to England, and were anxious to receive Sir Ralph. Their first child, so lovingly expected, died in the spring of 1654. 'Sweet Babby, tis happy,' wrote Sir Ralph, '& the more that it had noe share in the common sinnes and sufferings of these ill times.' 'My wife's faithfull service,' wrote Cousin Gee, '& hearty wishes for your liberty to endure the pennance of a third piece of Beefe, which is all you will find att Tuppendence, more then a reall welcome.'

Doll Leeke and Lady Hobart had all sorts of fine plans for Sir Ralph's release. Lady Warwick's name had been mentioned amongst others who might be approached, as she had more influence than ever in high places. Sir Ralph's reply must have fallen like a cold shower-bath upon these kind busybodies. 'I earnestly beseech you,' he wrote to Lady Hobart, 'not to write to the Person you wott of, concerning mee, or my release. I came in with the crowd, and shall willingly attend to goe out with it. Heere are many that gett off dayly (& I am glad to see the dore open) but to say truth some goe on soe hard, & others on soe unhansome Termes, that I had much rather remaine where I am, then bee at Claydon, on those conditions, although my owne occations did now as much as ever require me there. Divers of our Lords (with your Coz: Sir Fred:) have writ to the Protector & most of the Knights & gentlemen have petitioned him last Weeke, but as yet they can get noe answere. Sir Justinian Isham & my selfe sit still & are willing to see how they are like to succeed, before we appeare too pressing upon our new Masters; but we have a petition ready, which we hope may bee received at any time; being we crave nothing in it, but what they ought to

Aug. 13, 1655.

grant to every Englishman in our condition, as well as unto him or me.'

Sir Ralph claimed equal and public justice for all, not special favour for himself won by influence and intrigue; a position which the patriots of the Civil War would have warmly approved.

Henry writes, having just attended the assizes at Buckingham: 'I must needs say, the Judge att the sise, in his chardge, gave non of us much hopes of any of your libertyes, but didd tell us a did beelive the countrey in generall might bee discontented att their restraint, a excused the Protector and sed as state matters did stand, his highnesse had a good reason for it, & that the innosent should not suffer, for his designe was onley to punish the guilty; but not a word of any treyall when you should bee hard. . . . Mr Sheriff Kept a free and noble table for all commers, and wisht you heartely att it.' Aug. 13, 1655.

'Tis now neare seaven weekes since wee were taken,' Sir Ralph writes to Mr. Cordell, '& as yet wee have never been examined, neither can we yet discover why we were restrayned, nor when we shall be released.' July 30, 1655.

'Cozen Stafford is at Liberty uppon Bond, Collonell Ingolsby procured it, & one Collonell Pasterne a Norfolke gentleman is also freed, but Sir Justinian Isham & my selfe & all the rest of our number are still in Limbo, though we are daily promised a generall discharge.' Sir Ralph writes to Mrs. Sherard that he is allowed to remove to rooms belonging to her sister Susan Abercromby. 'When I was at St. James his Tennis Court, though I had a very good chamber, yet I had noe place for a servant in the house; they were forced, after I was in my bedd, to goe lodg neare Charing Crosse, which was soe inconvenient that I desired to change my Quarters; and my Aunts house being within the Jurisdiction of the Garrison; she with her mayd resolved to pack away for a considerable time.' Mrs. Sherard is surprised that he should be allowed 'noe greater Liberty, for I her of many as aier quite free, and com into the Countrey which was formerly Deepely ingaged for the lat King.' Aug. 23, 1655. Aug. 27, 1655.

Sept. 6, 1655. 'Your one wisdom & the protector's ill nature,' writes Lady Gawdy, 'makes mee dispare of seeinge you this sommer in my durty habitation.' Sept. 8, 1655. 'Divers of the Grandies,' Sir Ralph replies, 'doe confidently assure us wee shall bee released as soone as the Protector is well & perfectly recovered, but wee have been told the same story in effect at least 6 weekes togeather, yet Jeffery Palmer's being sett at liberty, gives us some small hope that wee may bee soe too.' The Protector had been ailing at intervals all through the summer; the Earl of Norwich wrote to Mr. Secretary Nicholas in the usual tone of a Royalist, alluding to the 'Arch Rebell': June 15, 1655. 'Questionlesse Cromwell is in huge disorder, as well in his owne bowels as his government.'

Sept. 3, 1655. Cousin Stafford writes after his release that if those who have been imprisoned are forbidden to go to London, at least he and Sir Ralph may hope to visit each other in Bucks, 'but how great our unhappiness may prove, if wee shall be deprived of the tuition of vigilant Major Browne.'

The troubles of the time put a strain upon all ordinary friendships. Sir Ralph had been reminding his father's old friend Lady Carnarvon (*née* Herbert), whose picture by Vandyke was amongst his most valued possessions, of a debt owed by her late husband to Sir Edmund amounting to 116*l.* 10*s.* Cousin Thomas Stafford had been the intermediary. Sept. 5, 1655. 'I moved yo^{r} business,' he writes, 'to the Lady Carnarvon according to yo^{r} instruction, and I found her very unwilling to meddle wth it, having putt on a resolution (upon the affronts of Russell and unhansom carrage of the wise Lord) to wth draw her selfe fro' all business of that nature for a time, But shee was pleased to say that Sir Orlando Bridgman's judgment must bee taken upon the securitie for all my lord's fathers debtes.' Sir Ralph had been asked the previous year to be a trustee to the 'little Lord' Carnarvon, but as these debts were still unsettled he thought himself not in a position to accept the trust. He wrote to Mr. Stafford: 'I thanke you for mooving the Lady Carnarvon about my money, but since she is soe coole in it, I shall let it rest awhile, had my late Father, or Mother been living, I

dare say this debt should have beene preferred in point of payment before any other. The service my Father did that family deserves a better requitall, & soe I shall tell my Lady the very next time I see her.' But the money was soon after repaid, and the old cordial relations were restored.

Sir Ralph was still in durance vile; mothers and nurses were in despair, no child in the family could be properly christened in his absence. 'Nat Smith,' grandson of Nat Hobart, was baptised at Radcliffe, 'and for want of a godly godfather,' Henry writes, 'they invited my worshipp to stand, for w^ch^ in a word I did with a grave & religious grace; many promises I did make for you, such if you performe not, shall bee put on your score, in the next world, and not mine, for I doe as little love deepe and sollem ingagements, as your honour doth entringe into bonds. I have given 20*s*. to the nurse and 20*s*. to the midwife and 10*s*. to the nurse-keeper as you ordered.' Sir Ralph wrote to the baby's grandmother: 'Sweet Cosen, I am infinitely joyed at your dearest daughter's saife Delivery, and wish myself Delivered too. . . . Nattecock like an honest Fellow & kinde, visited me on Sunday.' July 2, 1655. July 21, 1655.

For these country gentlemen, accustomed to live in the fresh air and to do all their business on horseback, it was most irksome and unwholesome to be penned up in London during the summer months, and one after another suffered in health. From the day of his enforced ride to London as a prisoner, in June, Sir Ralph was never in the saddle again till the end of October. So full are the records of this year that we can trace his occupations day by day. He eagerly welcomed every post that visited him. 'Letters,' he says, 'are a very greate comforte in the absence of our friendes, yet they cannot answere us a question though wee desire to bee satisfied in twenty severall perticulars concerning those wee love.'

Of good society there was no lack at St. James'; during the early part of the time 'new prisoners of quality' were 'dayly brought in.' But Sir Ralph had not much heart to join in it; he took his meals alone, and although Sir Roger

supposed 'that your whole company keepe together and are as merry as birds in a Cage,' Doll Leeke heard from Sir Frederick Cornwallis, who had just been let out of the cage, that Sir Ralph was not at all sociable. 'He was asked how you did, & he ansred you never came amongst them, therfor he could give no account of you.'

But Sir Ralph had at least one old acquaintance at St. James' who took the same line as he did about their detention, and with whom he had a great deal of pleasant intercourse. Sir Justinian Isham, who could win from sweet saucy Dorothy Osborne only the nickname of 'Sir Solomon,' had since found in Vere Leigh a wife who appreciated his solid excellence. He was sadly familiar with bonds and fines, and it added much to his present trouble that he had been torn away from his home when his wife most needed his care and love. News of the birth of a baby Vere reached him at St. James'.

Sir Ralph never lost the opportunity of forwarding a good match. He had Edmund to provide for and young Sir Charles Gawdy; Sir Justinian's four fair daughters by his first wife had considerable portions; hence the subject was of great mutual concern, and left room for 'treaties' as interesting and complicated as the moves in a game of chess. Sir Ralph writes to Lady Gawdy of the Miss Ishams with approval: 'The young Women have been bredd more in the country then at London.' 'Their Father dwells neare Northampton, is a very discreet person, of a plentifull Fortune & of an antient Family, who professeth (soe there bee a competencie) to preferre the parts & person of A man before his Fortune.' Of maidens Sir Ralph had Cary's step-daughters to think of, a number of young Hobarts and Dentons, and very specially his own sister Betty, who thus expressed her sense of his merits: 'I cannot say you have no skill in providing Husbands, for I am confident when you tack such an imployment upon you, that you will bring it to perfection.' But, alas for Betty's hopes, Sir Ralph found eldest sons a good deal easier to treat for than younger daughters, unless they were heiresses like Margaret

July 12, 1655

and Mary Eure, who were besieged with suitors. Robert Cotton of Combermere is 'languishing for love of Margaret, sayes his prayers backwards, & wishes all ill-luck to his rivalls.' Mrs. Isham recommends 'Mr. Bacchus' daughter and heiress' for Mun, but the 'little nitty old man' is treating simultaneously in another quarter, to Sir Ralph's great wrath, so these negotiations serve only to while away the time.

Lady Gawdy ventures to remonstrate again with Sir Ralph for refusing the conditions of release offered him. 'I am aprehensive you will not let selfe interest have any power to sway the lest part of that that lookes like honour. Pray only lay aside singularity, for to bee vertuous alone will bee interperted A vise.' Sept. 26, 1655.

Sir Ralph was not likely to be convinced by such feminine reasoning; but with many apologies his anxious friends return to the charge: Doll Leeke hopes he will not 'be perticular in the refusall, for Liberty is so presious (& the parsons you receve it from so indifirant whether you have it or noe) that you ought rather to court it, then to be nise in accepting, pardon me if I have said too much.' Sept. 26, 1655.

Cousin Stafford's men after hay-harvest have searched the hedgerows for elms for Sir Ralph. 'I pray remember my Sweet Bryer,' he writes; 'if those that gather the setts use to come to Winslow market, it will cost nothing to bring them to Claydon, for I will appoint my man Roades to take care of it there, hee seldome misses a markett day, I thinke you told mee they were about halfe a crown or 3 shillings a thousand, which is cheape enough, & if they be to be had at soe easy a Rate, I would have 2000 gathered as soone as you please. . . . Charme them least they send ordinary Bryers, for sweet Bryers; & lett me know if I may have woodbines at the same rate.' The very sound of woodbine and sweetbriar must have made Sir Ralph long to see the last remains of summer in his garden. Sir Roger, in despair, hopes at least that he may spend Christmas with them 'if non bee before hand with me, as I trust they are not, especially St. James.' Oct. 3, 1655.

Wearied out at last, though not convinced, Sir Ralph felt that he would make himself too conspicuous by being the only prisoner who refused to be liberated on terms which even Sir Justinian had now accepted. He therefore entered into a bond to the Lord Protector for 2,000*l.*, together with Dr. William Denton and Mr. Thomas Leeke; Lieut.-Col. Worsley to deliver up the bond at the end of a year if it were not forfeited in the meantime. 'Colonel Worsley then discharged Sir Ralph the next day out of prison.' This is his own account of it: 'On Thursday with the rest of the crowd, I sealed a Bond soe full of Barbarous conditions that I am ashamed to insert them here. All the Favour that could bee obtained was to get it limited for a yeare, but tis so untowardly penned that I doubt they will continue it longer on us. The Truth is if any one person of those I use to converse with all, had thought fit to refuse it, I should have done so too, but to bee singular in such a thing, at such a time, would have been interpreted meerly to be stubbornesse.'

London, Oct. 8, 1655.

Cary Gardiner wrote on the anniversary of the battle of Edgehill, 'The fatall day to Inglond & our family,' to congratulate him 'on his inlardgment.'

Oct. 23, 1655.

There is a memorandum in his own handwriting: 'The 26 Octob: 1655 I writ Mun word, I was come to Claydon uppon Bond.' Sir Roger writes: 'I am gladd any part of you is at liberty, though you bee no man of your hands, your feet will serve my turn, if you will but make good use of them now they are at liberty. Come when you will, I feare you not, since your hands are tied.'

'Forgive me,' wrote Lady Gawdy, 'if I receive sattisfaction in what you regrett at—your liberty. I looke at the impossibility of your haveinge it on termes agreeable to your judgment, and all that are over Come, are not conquered, nor are we answerable for our faits. There is a soveranity in honour which noe usurpation can depose, you are safe in that, & so longe may looke with contempt on inferior objects. If my desire of youre freedom bee an evidence

Oct. 10, 1655.

of my folly . . . tis noe nuse that our sex should want wisdom.'

Sir Ralph's reply defines his position. 'Madame, you are highly charritable in cheering upp a person in my condition, & I humbly thank you for it; for though the Example of very many (farre Wiser & better men then my selfe) might somewhat excuse my signing that ugly conditioned Bond, yet your approbation gives me farre more satisfaction then all that they have done. The truth is, though I infinitely desired to bee at home, & my occasions very much require mee there, yet it was to avoyd singularity rather then any thinge else, that induced mee to seale it; and were I now to begin againe (unlesse some others would joyne with mee) possibly I might struggle long to little purpose and at last be forced to accept of the same conditions, to avoyd a greater mischeife. For those that are now in power take it very ill, and will not allow that the least of theire commands should bee disputed by any, much lesse by so inconsiderable a person as Madame, Your humblest servant, R. V.' Oct. 15, 1655.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MAJOR-GENERALS AND THE SQUIRES.

1655–1657.

Sir Ralph's satisfaction in his release from imprisonment was soon clouded by fresh anxieties. The year 1655 had seen Cromwell's protest and Milton's sonnet on behalf of the persecuted Piedmontese; all Europe recognised the power of the Lord Protector to defend English and Protestant interests abroad; the commercial and industrial classes at home were prosperous and, on the whole, contented: but in these triumphant days of the great Puritan's rule the little world pictured in the Verney letters was plunged in sadness. It was a world of 'poor unknown Royalist squires,' as Carlyle terms them, and of other squires by no means Royalist, who vainly tried to remain 'unknown' to the Major-Generals, 'Cromwell's Mastiffs,' who had fastened on their estates. The dismal words, composition, compurgation, decimation, sequestration (as uncouth and un-English in sound as in political import), appear constantly in the letters, and the squires shuddered to be reminded that they had been classed as Malignants, Delinquents, Compounders, or at the best as 'Disaffected Only.'

These troubles were the more bitterly felt because the country gentlemen were just beginning to breathe again after the long fierce strife of the Civil War. Some had ventured to return home after years of exile; many country houses like Wroxall, Lamport, and Claydon were being repaired and beautified, and old debts paid off, when the landowners were suddenly overwhelmed with fresh exac-

tions. 'Of all mine acquaintance, there is scarce an honest man that is not in a borrowing condition,' writes Sir Ralph.

An act of kindness greatly cheered his own return home. A servant arrived with a beautiful roan mare (such as Sir Ralph would never have purchased for his own riding) and a note from Aunt Sherard 'because . . . you should be well mounted to bring you throoe the Deepe waies, I have presented you with this maier, being confident shee will carry you iseylie, shee is to be rid in a bit, for elce her metell is such as shee will goe tow fast for your grave pas . . . let your servants have a caier of the maier after watering, for elce shee may run awaie with them.' 'Yeasterday you surprised mee strangly,' he replies, 'with such a greate, and unexpected present, that I know not what to say, if any thing could possibly make me a jocky, certainly you have taken the way to doe it, I finde it already a little coming uppon me, for (though I never was on Horseback since y^e^ middle of June, yet) I am soe in love with this maire, that I am now growne almost weary of my coach, and choose to ride on her to Hillesdon presently; perhapps she may put me into such a gadding humour, that you (and all the rest of my friends & acquaintance) may have just cause to repent your Bounty.' 'I am most harteyli glad as the maier pleseth you,' writes Aunt Sherard; 'I toocke it uppon trust, for I have noe scill in horsis my selfe. All y^e^ newes I have to relat to you is that yo^r^ old acquaintance that toocke you prison'r is to be in this country to tacke y^e^ bondes of all the jhentrey in the cuntray that thay acket not against my lord protector. The cavaleres aier to give 5,000 pond bond, and A 100 pond bond for every servant thay keepe, this is y^e^ newes of ower cuntry, and we expecte ower mastor her on Munday next, but he stais not above a wicke in thes partes, you see my Lord protector can secewer himselfe—I licke him well.'

Oct. 29, 1655.

Nov. 1, 1655.

Nov. 5, 1655.

'If my nagg come to you whilst at home,' Dr. Denton writes, 'I pray see him goe uppon his pace, if this storme hold, a long-eared asse may serve my turne.' Sir Justinian hopes that Sir Ralph 'will vouchsafe him some stay at Lamport,' 'where you may see what the want of my

Nov. 10, 1655.

Nov. 2, 1655.

presence hath now necessitated me to in very ill season, my house not yet all covered nor yet, I assure you so open as you shall ever find the heart of Sir, Your affectionate friend to serve you.'

Nov. 10, 1655. Sir Justinian is worried with 'new bonds indeterminable & in greater sums offered even to them who had given others formerly at Lond: as also single bonds for the good behaviour of servants, noe particulars of the estates to be received before the bonds were signed, & they to be signed forthwith, or els imprisonment & sequestration to follow imediately.' This letter is signed for greater safety—'yours Architrave Freeze & Cornice.'

Dr. Denton is running about the town in Sir Ralph's interest, but can see neither Colonel Cooke, 'whom I hunted dry foot,' nor Lord Fleetwood. His advice to Sir Ralph is

Nov. 17, 1655. 'to appeare when sumoned & I thinke best to deliver noe particular, but crave leave to appeale to my L^d^ or his councell or to both, for though you claime noe Articles, nor have any need of any act of oblivion (you are of my L^d^ Cooke's mind to refuse noe pardon that God & his kinge would give him) yett y^u^ claim by a law paramount to them, which is y^r^ iñocency, as havinge never been a Delinq^t^ etc. they told S^r^ Jo: Mounson [the elder brother of the Doctor's friend in the Fleet] that they came not to dispute etc. & he refusinge to submitt, they quartered 50 horse on him, with a menace of 500 more in case he did not submitt within 8 daies, which he not doinge, they did not send 500 horse but sequestred him. . . . I heare y^e^ 10^th^ is to be a perpetuall revenue, maugre all intayles & settle^nts^, & that Sequestracon & Delinquency shall not be the only standard, but Dissaffection shall in due time have its place, & inquiry is made after the estates of such as died Delinquents unsequestred, as Earle of Sunderland etc., & of Disaffected Only, as M^r^. Darcy etc.'

Mr. Cordell had consulted Sir Ralph as to whether he might venture to return to England with Robert Cotton, 'though known to bear a Royalist name.' Sir Ralph

Aug 28, 1655 thought that he might, 'soe that you keep noe mallignant

Company . . . but Sir mistake me not, for I doe not thinke you can with safety come to London, by reason of the Protector's late Proclamation which prohibits all that have adhered to the late King, or his party from being here, or within twenty miles till the 20th October next, and unless they have spetiall license, or are under restraynt, or in eminent danger of death, or that London bee their usuall habitation. Now Sir, though you never did act anything, yet how farre the word "adhered" will be interpreted to extend, I dare not take upon me to determine, but Sir, Claydon is 40 miles from hence, & whether I am there or not, you shall bee sure to bee welcome. . . . Mr Cotton is out of all danger for when he went from home, hee was not old enough to adhere to any side. Your company may possibly draw him unto my house & that would be a double favour.' Mr. Cordell, however, upon this report decided to remain abroad, especially as Sir Ralph had procured him a fresh pupil, John, son of Sir Orlando Bridgeman. A few months later Sir Ralph was shocked to receive the following letter from the young man: 'Sir, I make no question but you will be as much surprized as I have been perplexed with the sadd and unexpected newse of the death of my deare freind Mr. Cordell, who immediately uppon his coming to Paris fell sicke, and dyed in lesse then 10 dayes, it beeing now about 3 weekes since this suddaine & unfortunate accident happened, which hath soe troubled mee that I could not recollect my selfe sooner, to give you timelier notice of it.' Sir Ralph, writing in December 1653, alluded to 'the sad accident which befell Monsr Du Val which caused his death,' so of the trio of Sir Ralph's friends who had met at Blois, Cousin Gee alone survived.

Dec. 10, 1655.

Dismal letters come in from various other counties. Cary writes from Hampshire: 'Major [General] Goff hath bin in thes parts this day fortnight, and continues heare; all I heare he hath yet don is to send for all sequestred parsons, and Romes catholicks, and that they must pay the tenth part tord the maintenance of an army besides ther usiall contrabution, but as yet nothing is setled, what more

Dec. 4, 1655.

he may due as yet we know not, only ther is a flying report that ther must be no more sherifes but the truth I cannot tell.'

Sir Roger, who does not despair of having his friend's company at 'Pie-tide,' tells him of the proceedings in Warwickshire. 'The grand commissioner is come to these parts, and convented before him the principall gentry of o^r^ County that have either been sequestred, or sequestrable, though they escaped the hands of the Coñittee.' Sir Thomas Lee and Sir Francis Willoughby have suffered much, Sir Clement Fisher tries to escape though sequestered, amongst those who have later manifested their good will to the Commonwealth. 'S^r^ George Devoreux though not sequestred, being charged for sending in two horses, pleaded that his unruly sonne tooke them out of his stable without his knowledge or consent, and went to the Kinge with them, this reprieved him for the present however, & was dismiss'd upon it.'

Dec. 10, 1655.

It is a sad Christmas. Henry is doleful, these are no days for 'progresses of pleasure.' 'How to dispose of myselfe I know not, for if proclamations march forth thus thick, and all sports put downe, & the gentrey not permitted to meete, I am suer my fortune will be to break.' There were many better men than Henry Verney who held the same opinion. The Doctor made a brave show of cheerfulness. Sir Ralph had sent up some additions to their Christmas fare. 'I have very good skill in Buns,' he wrote, 'and when I have tasted them, you shall have the doctor's opinion of them. . . . Kate says you are very quaint, & yet but a scrubbed K^t^, she doubts you want a Bun your selfe you are so waggish. Mall saies you are a cheatinge K^t^ for sending 4 puddings short of what you write.'

'Claydon loves not Christmas,' writes Sir Ralph, 'wee are all Roundheades on that point to save charges, w^ch^ is now more allowable being threatened with such new & greate Impositions, meere necessity will force us to bee strangely thrifty: were I somewhat younger I would binde my selfe

Apprentice to old Audley [the miser], for I know not an abler master to teach mee to bee provident.'

Sir Roger writes on Christmas Eve: 'I understood by yours of the 17th that you were then at Claydon, but to prevent suspition of superstition you intended very suddenly to remove, but you tell me not whither, but I suppose not far unless hither, least the Abbattess of Wroxall send a bull to excommunicate you. . . . The Major Generall is, as I heare, gon out of our County & I presume hath left his directions to be observed by the Commissioners. . . . I pray let me hear how you have disposed of yourself this Xmas, its possible I may hold it as superstitious to keep it next yeare as you doe this.'

Tom, in 'weather so piercing cold,' and 'with fingers so nummed' that he can hardly write, is the only one who goes through the form of wishing Sir Ralph 'a merry, happy, & joyfull Christmas.' 'Had things fell out as I once expected, this blessed time might have proved somewhat fortunate to mee.' And there is a piteous whine for 'a small augmentation' of his quarter, long since forestalled.

Henry is at Wolverton, and proposes to Sir Ralph to dine with him there. He replies from Claydon that he would willingly have done it 'uppon the score of kindred' on his way from town, 'but I thought you had known me better then to imagen (that without greate & pressinge businesse) my old and lazy bones (in these short daies & ill waies) could goe from hence to Wolverton & dine & chat, and return back heather in a day.' Jan. 19, 1656.

Dr. Denton writes from town: 'On Munday last 2 prisoners walking with theire soldat in the springe garden, endeavored to bribe him, but not prevaylinge, went to bind him, which not succeedinge they shot him, some say with his owne musquett, others with a pockett pistoll. This hath occasioned all prisoners to be called to theire quarters, & some say they will suddenly be tried for theire lives.' He writes again: 'There is a Committee of 4, viz: Lambert, Fleetwood, Mulgrave, Jones, appointed to consider what prisoners are fittest to be released, but they have not yett Jan. 24, 1656. Jan. 31, 1656.

sate. The souldier that was wounded in Springe garden by the 3 prisoners is dead, & he that killed him is in the dungeon, & the others are prisoners & are all to be tried for theire lives—dy sure enough [will] one or more.'

Sir Ralph wishes to spend the spring in safe obscurity at Claydon, and Sir Roger writes hoping that he may remain 'a fixed starr' in his own region. 'I perceive you are shortly in expectation of a visitt from a person of quality: I shall longe to heare that it is well over.'

'You doe not heare that I am sent for to Alsbery,' Sir Ralph writes to Roades, 'for if you did, you would certainly send a messenger to me with the summons, or a copy of it. But I trust in God they will let me Rest in quiet.' There is a rumour of a warrant out against him, but perchance ''tis but a Fable.' Sir Ralph's fears, however, are soon confirmed. He receives a list of forty persons summoned to appear before the 'person of quality' to whom Sir Roger referred, in which his own name appears; and a second list of the Bucks Commissioners sitting with Lord Fleetwood the Major-General, or in his absence with 'Major Packer,' as Chairman of the Court.

It is sufficient to read the two lists, in which the gentlemen of a county are pitted against each other, one set as judges and the other as delinquents, to understand the irritation caused by the formation of such tribunals. Dr. Denton, writing to Sir Ralph of an action he has brought before
Dec. 1655. Quarter Sessions, advises him 'to end it to-night before to-morrow if possible, & before any Major Generalls appeare in your Quarters . . . for I believe many of your Justices will be coadjutors & informers. Verbum sapienti suf.'

Sir Ralph applied to the clerk of the former Sequestration
March 7, 1656. Committee, and received a certificate 'that it doth not appeare (neither is there) any charge of Delinquency, Sequestration or otherwise against the said Sir Ralph Verney.' He also obtained from the Haberdashers' Hall a note of the proceedings formerly instituted against him. and the sub-

sequent entry 'at the Committee for the County of Bucks sitting at Aylsbury the 29th of May 1647. . . . That the estate of Sir Ralph Verney was the 5th of January then last discharged of Sequestracion by order of the Committee of Lords & Commons.' He had also 'a note for the horses given by him, as a voluntary contribution to the Parliamentary Army, during the Civil War.' Thus fortified, Sir Ralph appealed to Cromwell. The Doctor was of opinion that the petition would avail little. 'Favour goes further than arguments.' Cousin Smith helped Sir Ralph in drafting his petition, but he did not succeed in saving his own fortune from decimation. March 11, 1656.

It would have comforted the poor Bucks squires who rode away from 'the George in Aylesbury' on that black Friday with such unpleasant documents buttoned under their riding-coats, could they have foreseen how soon the power of the Major-Generals was to be swept away.

Meanwhile 'the said Tax,' imposed with such extreme precision, had to be met at once. Squire Smith's hospitalities ever tended to exceed his income; and, with his stables full of horses, and an increasing number of little heads in the nursery upstairs, he and his wife must have spent an anxious evening over ways and means, after his twenty-miles' ride home. Sir Ralph resented the injustice of being taxed as a malignant quite as much as the financial loss.

Mun, who is ever 'a very ill manager of his affairs,' has spent the money sent him for his journey home, and asks for more: 'I am now in very great trouble,' replies his father, 'and in danger to loose the Tenth part of my Estate, & if I deliver not in a perticuler of my Estate reall & personall on Thursday next, they will sequester me. This puts me to an appeale to the Protector & Councell, which is not only very chargeable to follow, but the successe soe Hazardous, that I know not which way to turne me. I am now giveing over Housekeeping, and discharging the most part of my Workmen that were building and fiting upp my March 4, 1656.

House, & I shall lessen my Family all I can, to put me in a capacity to pay my deare Father's Debts; which I see (by your expenses) you considder soe little, that I am resolved to considder them the more. . . . I should have been glad to have seene you contract your expenses into a narrower compasse. . . . I shall now bee silent, & begg of God to direct us both for the best. Adieu. . . . The Pacquet Boate from Dunkerke to Dover, is much the shortest Passage, but take heed then of bringing anything more with you then the cloathes uppon your Back, & those the Worst you have, for tis reported the passengers (by reason of our Warre with Spaine) are often pillaged. . . . God blesse you in your jorney & grant us a good meeting, & make you happier then your most affectionate father.'

March 21, 1656. Dr. Denton writes: 'Deare Raph, I doe not thinke to make use of any Privy Councellor or any eminent person (who doe not love to be too much troubled) for my owne selfe, but will reserve them to spend theire shott for somebody else. I have little crotchetts in my nodle & I will first try what they will doe. You will want Sir R[ichard] T[emple] to bringe you to the little officers, & to acquaint you with some little waies.'

March 17, 1656. Sir Roger wonders 'how any can possibly wind themselves into an estate that hath so much innocency to protect it, but my hopes are that your feares are more than your dainger . . . trouble not your self, for an appeale to my Lord Protector, so noble & upright a person, I question not but will free you from such high inconveniences.' Some of the agencies Dr. Denton alluded to were set in motion, but the 'eminent person,' Thomas Sandford, a cousin of Charles, 'Lord Fleetwood,' who was induced to write to one of the Bucks Commissioners was a good deal more anxious not to compromise himself, than to help on Sir Ralph's petition.

March 20, 1656. Sir Ralph 'in greate perplexitie' went down to Aylesbury; the Protector had referred his petition back to the Bucks Committee, and he had prepared the 'perticuler' of his property in case he should not get a reprieve. He returns his estate at Middle Claydon as worth about 711*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

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yearly, but states 'that a greate part of it being in his owne hands, & other parts being never let neither by himselfe nor his Father but alwaies managed by a Bayliffe, he cannot set downe the yearly rent exactly.' There are only '4 Dairy Cowes'; but there are '13 draught Bullocks; a coach and 2 coach horses, 3 Saddle Horses, 6 young steres, 1 yearling calfe; Wood, Hay, Peate & some Timber brought to be used about his house, worth about 150*l.*; his household goods his servants estimate about 300*l.*, but his debts amount to ten times more than this money.' He mentions some 'small Rents at Mursley, besides a cottage or two that never paid any Rent.'

He writes to Dr. Denton from Aylesbury an account of his long and harassing day before the commissioners, when he argued his own case. 'Deare D^r^, I followed your directions & pressed all that could bee for a rehearing, soe they bid me withdraw, but being called in againe, they told me plainly though there were new matter, it lay not in their power to relieve mee, for they had only authority to charge all that were sequestered, not to acquitt them; they were not judges whether I was justly sequestered or not, that belonged only to the protector & his councell, & therefore they desired my perticuler. Then I acquainted them with the reference from the protector, & pressed hard for a suspension, soe they bid me withdraw againe, they told mee they would certify but they would not suspend, but they would give me till their next meeting (which would be about 3 weekes hence) to pay in my money, & if in the interim I could be discharged, they would be well pleased. Then I pressed very hard againe for a suspension, & lett them see how much harder it was to get a decimation [taken off] then to keep my selfe from being decimated. But when I saw there was no remedy, I desired that my name might not be entered into any of their bookes, nor any of their proceedings against me, for twas not the money I stood upon, but the mark of delinquency. Soe they bid me withdraw againe, & being called in they told [me] they would comply with mee in that, & cause the clerk only to take short noates of all that

concerned mee, but not to enter it in any booke, till my Lord Protector's pleasure were knowne upon my petition. I urged that 'twas unlikely I should gett an answer before the time of payment of my money, & if it were entred into the Treasurer's booke, it would bee an evidence against mee, soe they told mee it should not be entred into any booke, though it were paid. Upon this I give them a perticuler which was read, & being appointed to withdraw the 4th time, they called me in againe & asked mee how & when those rentcharges & reversions were settled. I replied by my uncle Sir Francis, by my father many yeares since, & some by my selfe, soe they told mee if I did not gett the discharge, I must pay the Tenth, for what was mentioned to be in possession, which I gave in at 722*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.* per annum, & they told mee they would passe by that which was in reversion, & my personal estate also which I valued in all at 450*l.*'

It would seem by this account that the gentlemen to whom this ungracious and difficult work was given took some trouble to carry it out with patience and fairness, so far as their instructions allowed them. Sir Ralph thereupon drafted a second petition to Cromwell, which he sent in with a certificate, signed by seven of the Bucks Commissioners, that they found he had been formerly released from sequestration 'by a Committee of both Houses of Parliament,' and the final decision as to the decimation was again referred to his Highness.

William Roades, who knew better than any one how fiercely the Royalists had resented Sir Ralph's action in the past, wrote the following memorandum for Dr. Denton: 'Sir, My master Sir Raph Verney has had very hard measure, first to have his father slaine in the late Kinges service, and after that great losse, to suffer so much by the Kinges soldiers. For first prince Morris' soldiers did discharge farmer Francis Tuckwell and the rest of his tenants at Tingwick in Buckingham in the year 1643, to pay him no more Rent, but pay it to them, and plundered the tenant, & threatened him so much, as he was faine to leave his hous

because he was my masters tenant ; and in the yeare 1644, Sir luoe dives [Sir Lewis Dives] who was governor of Abindon, feld as many elms of his there as was near worth fower score pound, and I hearing of went to Abindon, and the governor tok me prisoner, & told me he had my Masters Rents asigned to him, and charged me not to borow a peny of them ; and in the year 1645 Sir William Campion, governor at Borstall, feld his trees in his grounds to the value of twentie ponds, and feched divers of tenant, horses and cartes from claydon, and when I did goe in hopes to redeeme them, they told me if they had my master they would slater him, for he was worse then those slaine beasts, for he holp to slay his own father ; and in the said year 1645 they came to my house, took away my horses, & shot one of my children, and when I went for Recompense, they told me it were no mater if I were hanged for serving such a master, and threatened to kill me ; and at Cromarsh in Oxfordsheare they feld most of his trees, and at Fifield at least fiftie ponds worth of elmes to mend their garison at Wallingford in the year 1644, and said if my master were there, they would cut & fell him as they did the trees : and about that tim those tenants sent their horses to claydon in hopes of saftie, and the lord Birone tuck them all away, and I went after him for them, and they told me my Master was a Rebell and wood not her me speak. Those horses were well worth neer a hundred ponds. Sir, these be sad storeys to relat to you, but being he is lick to suffer on the contrary sid, which I kno him innocent in, and for him to suffer for suffering such hard mesure before—I will leave you to judge of his cause and pray to God to relese him, which is the hartie desire of your humble sarvant Will : Roades.

'Sir if all these particklars were made knon to the lords of the counsell I doe fully assur my self they would not let my master suffer by a Decimation, for all these particklars are treue above mentioned.' A formal affidavit was afterwards signed by Roades, in which he told of a second visit to his house, when 'his stable & Lodging Roomes were pulled downe,' and of the expense his master had incurred in repairing

them, and he quotes another of the brutal Royalist jokes, that rankled in the memory of the sufferers for years after; when at Claydon the soldiers drove away the poor people's cattle, and he went 'to intreate for them, they told him if his Master were boyled as the beefe, it were noe matter.'

April 25, 1656. Mun is on his way home; Dr. Morley's son is travelling with him from the Hague. 'Mon âme se repaist de plaisantes fantaisies par l'espoir de jouir bientost de vostre veüe.' He arrived on the 8th of May; Sir Ralph, with nervous caution, desired him to conceal his lodging, and sent his letters to 'Mr. Webster, a haberdasher.' The Doctor laughed at 'a secret now generally knowne,' for Mun had run up against 'my Lord Sherard's man, who knew him in Holland, and Sir Ralph went up to town to meet him.'

Mrs. Westerholt got ready 'the orange chamber and the closett' for their return home; 'and if I had but sope that I might Wash,' she wrote, 'I woulde, when that were done, wish your worship at Claidon with all my heart.' This dearth of household stores, the result of Sir Ralph's virtuous retrenchments after the decimation, would have confirmed Doll Leeke in her oft-expressed opinion, that a man could never manage his own housekeeping. The sugar he had sent down was 'fitter to spende in the house, then to preserve with,' and the housekeeper was fain 'humbly to desire your worshipp to buy any powder sugar for preserving that may be very white, otherwise I shal have noe credit by doeing any fruite with it, nor your worshipp be pleasd in seeing it come to your table.' She is almost without currants and raisins, and the glasses sent down for preserving are too expensive and not suitable for the 'chery marmalad.' She wants 'glasses without brims, being they are not sent to the table, & those are not soe soone broke, I desire to have 2 dozen of them.' Mrs. Westerholt was hard to please in this matter. Doctor writes: 'Nor Sis. Sherard, nor wife, nor Elms nor glassman could understand y^r patterne for y^r glasses, so y^u are to find out a new project.'

Though Sir Ralph told Mun that he was stopping all his building, he had previously ordered 150,000 bricks to be

made for him; and it was impossible at once to discharge his workmen. They gave the careful housekeeper a good deal of trouble in his absence. She had just sent off to Sir Ralph a lordly pasty, containing three dozen and five pigeons, and she took the opportunity of airing her woes. 'Sir, this last week cam Pursell the carpenter and his men, he only himselfe sate in the house, but all his men come in for their beere, and that not seldom nor in small proportions; and by theire example all the workmen doe soe worry me for drinke, that though I many times anger them, and hourly vex myselfe, with deniing one or other of them, yet wee spend a great deale of beer—three barells the last weeke. Sir, I beseech you be pleased to let me know your will, whether they shall have it still or noe, for I am very loath, alonge with the trouble that I have with them, to have that of the feare of youre displeasure. I wish with all my heart that your Worshipps businesse woulde permit your presence here. Sir, I received a note to have Ralph Roads look to the gutters, I have spoke to him, and hee will doe it, but it did not raine in at all, the last time, of raine.' June 9, 1656.

While Sir Ralph's fate still hung in the balance, and he was 'daily haunting the council,' the steward discovered, to his horror, that a serpent lurked amongst Sir Ralph's apple trees. His own gardener was telling stories against him, which were already the subject of village gossip, and might readily spread to Aylesbury.

The origin of the gardener's discontent was a true Briton's dislike of a foreign fellow-servant, whom he wrongly supposed to be a Papist. Roades writes how 'he fell upon Misho . . . & had killed him . . . had he not been reskewed. Misho he tells me that Jayn and Mrs. Aris' mayd and the gardener did take a lader that Misho has to tie the aples, & put one part of one sid, and one part on the other sid the pailes, and so went over, as they pretended to look after a turkey's nest, but it was at night and Misho in the hous, and they did not aske him for the Key of the gate, but he comming in with his gun found them there, but his gun was not charged, but Misho told the gardener he did ill to goe over the pailes June 14, 1656.

with that lader to teach people to doe so, but might as well have asked for the key, and then the gardener told him he had more to do ther then he had: and pressently puld him by the haire and scratched his face, and by report, beat him very much, took away his gun and told him you . . . did contrary to the lord protectors order, and when I told him if he weere afrayde of Misho, he might a kep the gun in his chamber or gave it M^rs^ Westerholt or my self, he told me you would not anser the keping of it in your hous, and as for using of you ill in words, I hear it is his continuall talke, dronck or sober, before and sence: that you kept your son apurpos in holand be cause you might the better send money to your son as he might send it to the prince, which he sais he can prove; and that you kep papisis in your hous, and keep showlibord playing and nin pins with other games in your house on Sondaies contrary to order, and this he will justifie. Mrs. Westerholt tells me as well as John Andrewes, and my son Miller . . . it is the whole towne talke I veryly beleeve he is a very dangerus fellow and cares not to tell a lie nether doth he fear an oath. I need not tell you what to saie to him but I beleeve good wordes will be best for the anger of such a felow is lick the radging of a mad dogg that cares not how he bits nor who. This morning being sondaie I went and spoak with him and told him you send to me to tell him you would have him com up to london to you . . . I told him I would bespeak a place in the waggon but he told me he would not goe to you, he knew you ware angry with him, but he cared not for it, and that you hiered him to doe his sarvice in the contrie and if you had anything to saie to him you might send to him your mind as well as send for him or stay tell you com downe. I told him my busines was most in the contrie but yf you sent for me I should goe without disput and then he told me . . . with divers idle words he thought it was to part with him, he told me he had been with you a quarter of a year and yf you turned him of you should pay him for half a year and that no sarvant of yours should pay him for he scorned to receve his wages from any hand

but yours. Alas poore man I pray god give him grace with humilitie.'

Mrs. Westerholt further reports that the gardener threatened the woman at the village public-house when she refused him drink, that 'she shoulde not sell ale long, & though she thought Sir Ralph Verney would uphold her, *hee* (which was all the title he bestowed) should have enough to do to save himselfe.' This report annoyed and alarmed Sir Ralph extremely. It was important that his son should appear with him to disprove any possible complicity with Royalist plots at the Hague, if questions were asked by the Commissioners. Mun, meanwhile, heedlessly intent on his own diversions, wrote to his father that 'having by good fortune met with an old acquaintance of mine, one Mr. Hayre, Sir Ralph Hayre his brother, I could not denye the accompanying of him into Norfuck,' and vanished for some days, leaving no address. The gardener, however, went away quietly. Roades gave him 1*l.* more than his due, and the parish clerk undertook to water the flowers and 'turf the court.' Sir Ralph heard from Ball, the nursery-man, of another man 'most Emenent of any about, for neat houses, Mellons, Sparragus and Colyflowr, & all other ordenary things, tho' for graftinge he hath not much judgm^{t}.' His wages are not stated, but Mrs. Elin Tippinge gives us some notion of what they would be, as her young gardener 'is tempted by great Squire Lea of Hartwell for 16*l.* a year, and he hath even given us the go-by, & put me in much wrath, for I had gotten many laborers & thought to have made my garden so fin, & I am now defeatted.'

Sir Ralph's affairs are going badly. After some six or seven weeks' delay, 'the Protector & Councell' deliver him over once more to the tender mercies of the Major-General and the County Commissioners. He writes to Lady Gawdy: July 3, 1656. 'I am this day going downe uppon the businesse of my Decimation, but with soe little hopes of good successe, that were not Alisbery soe very neare to Claydon, I should scarce goe thether about it, unlesse it were to give an oppertunity to the Major Generall & Comissioners to make their injustice

shine more clearly, which you may guesse to bee a needlesse errand being most men are already fully satisfied in that point. The coachman storms & vowes hee cannot staye a minute longer,' and so Sir Ralph's complimentary ending is perforce cut short.

Some alternative having been given him which he was unable to accept, the decimation was finally confirmed; and he was forbidden to come to town for six months. 'It is as well a marke of your virtue as of your misfortune,' writes Lady Gawdy, 'and such as are so accompanyed with honour may bee received with les regrett.'

Public interest now centred in the coming Parliament, which would either confirm or destroy the authority of the Major-Generals. Dr. Denton writes from Overton, Cheshire, where he is visiting the Alports: 'Here is a new Major Generall come downe, his name is Bridges, & I heere, labours to have a great influence upon elections, & that he hath laid a good foundation to his minde in Staffordshire as he passed. Its thought he will misse of his ayme however. There is like to be strong & stout canvassinge. The sheriff & justices at the last sessions pitched on 4, to which they will unanimously adhere. Sir Wm. Brereton he stands on his owne leggs & labours might & maine, & the Major he intends to prefer others. Bradshaw writt not to be nominated nor chosen. Steel was in nomination, but hearinge he is designed for Ireland he is laid by. . . . The High Sheriffe hath beene here these 2 daies, & we goe to his house on tuesday sennight, the knight will be chosen on Wenesday next & then you shall heare more. I heare Roles & Barcklay "the last of the old judges" are both dead. Here hath beene a strange rumor of the securinge of Vane, Bradshaw, Ludlow & others, but noe certainty, a little newes doth well here. All to all Vale, Yours Wm. D.' He has seen a mountain ash for the first time. 'Here is a fine wild ash (which the South yeelds not) which beareth red berries (now ripe & last longe on the trees) as pleasant to looke uppon as cherries trees, only the fruit little bigger then hawes, the usuall ornament of flower potts & windowes

Aug. 15, 1656.

of these parts. I am promised setts of som; if I can gett them I will send som to old Raph the Provider General.'

In September Sir Roger writes from London of the new House of Commons that 'some were for the taking in peices the whole body of the law.' Sept. 6, 1656.

Penelope writes from Oxfordshire: 'There is such breaking up of houses and binding the people in there beads that a maid Sarvant as usally did ly in my hous will not stay in it when I have Fawler, and I ever had a man that lay in the hous bysids, but that will not satisfy them the time to com.' Sept. 1656.

Sir Ralph had also been visited. 'My house was lately searched by a captaine and 12 Troopers who obeyed theire orders but I must needs say with civility enough.' Lady Gawdy has not 'bine yett so much considerd as to have such potent viseters, & she hopes they may never return to his prejudice.' Sept. 29, 1656.

Sir Ralph took his decimation sadly to heart, and he was troubled by an eruption on his leg and thigh which would not heal. He was deluged with advice by his lady friends. Doll wished him to drink asses' milk while he sat in a bath of it up to the neck, for two hours twice a day; a less tedious remedy is a lotion 'so violant a drop would fech of the skin wher it touched'; and a dreadful old woman is recommended who has an infallible 'oyntment for yumurs.' He wants to go to town to petition the House, but his friends think that 'it is not safe for the foxe to come to the Court.'

Sir Roger amidst the 'continual vexations' of the session wishes Sir Ralph 'all the happiness that a Country life may afforde, and that I know by experience to surpass all that this Citty can give'; but rural life had its own peculiar crosses. Sir Ralph presents his 'service to Mr Frem: Gaudy; for his better encouragement in Planting tell him this last weeke one villanous Cow in one night spoyled my whole Nursery; in earnest I had rather have given ten pounds, soe greate a fondnesse of these Trifles hath Yours etc. etc. R. V.' Nov. 24, 1656.

Uncle and Aunt Isham have been staying at Claydon, and Sir Ralph is visiting Edmund Denton. Dec. 8, 1656.

The Doctor has his joke about the Decimation Bill which the friends of the Government pushed on while their opponents were spending Christmas with their families. 'Decimacon had but a poore Xtmas dinner no sweet plum broath nor plum pye, for they chose that day to bring it in when armiger was in patinis, & soe it gott the liberty to be entertained [by] the house, though Glyn yet spake stoutly agst it but was outvoted by 20^{ty} voices, if the house fill, much good may be hoped for, if not, actum est.'

Dec. 29, 1656.

Doll Leeke writes: 'I fancied you might have come this crismus but you have so totally forgot it that you do not compliment us so much as to wish your self with us. I wold be a littell severe but that I wold have you beleve that I have altred that part of my nature, and have resolved to be all my life kind, for now I am so ould ther is no dainger in profising it.' Moll Gape thanks him for a chine 'variety maketh pleasure & therefore your cold one is so well accepted.'

Dec. 10, 1656.

Sir Roger continues to report the progress of the long debate. 'Tomorrow a fast is appointed to be kept, wher the prayers but not advise of 5 Ministers are desired, for they are not to preach but pray. The men are to be—Owen: Manton: Caroll: Nye and Gelaspie a Scotchman: thus much for newes, for the great feast & banquet with which the Parl^{t} was most sumptuously entertained at Whitehall on fryday last, I know the whole kingdome almost rings of it.' 'The bill for Kingship goes on,' Dr. Denton writes, 'notwithstanding Lambert is highly against it, not without some passion, others say peevishness; Wolseley & Fiennes for it.'

Feb. 26, 1657.

Feb. 26, 1657.

Sir Roger continues his report: 'As for the Major Gen^{ls} if they were wounded it was thorow the sides of Decimation, the bowells wherof were peirced by a Negative vote of the par^{lt}: viz: that the bill which was brought in to confirme that peice of Tyranny should not be so much as comitted, and positively rejected. The Major Gen. were not so much as named, but sublata causâ you know what followed. I suppose that the 6 mounths banishment is now expired

March 12, 1657.

. . . .and that ther shall be another house to give check to this I presume you are not ignorant, the Maj. Gen: are as like Lambs upon this account as they were Lyons upon the other, for they expect some amends by this, expecting to be in the number of those that shall be elected Lords by the L^d^ Prot. for that house. Diverse of the Courtiers are pleased to absent themselves from the parl^t^ upon this occasion, for they are ashamed some of them to appeare for that cause against which they have been formerly so violent.'

Sir Ralph had no lack of congratulations, and we can almost hear Moll Gape's loud voice as she leant over the apothecary's shoulder and dictated her hearty message: 'Molly rejoyceth that the sixe months are expiring, and doubly rejoyceth because shee shall then see S^r^ Ralph, all of him, his whole tenne parts reunited, not a collop left behinde to feede y^r^ Dawes, yett shee doth not wish that what they have already may choake them & therein disagrees from S^r^, Y^r^ true servant, W^m^ Gape.'

And thus Cromwell's military tribunals were suddenly swept away. It is impossible to read the detailed accounts of the vexation and expense they brought upon individuals, uniting men of such opposite politics as Sir Justinian Isham and Sir Ralph Verney by a common grievance, without realising how much they did, in a Puritan county like Bucks, to reconcile the country squires on the Parliamentary side to a Stuart restoration. There were few indeed who would not have joined with Thomas Stafford, when he made it his 'dayly petition to our heavenly Father, and gracious protector' that He would grant us 'a speedy deliverance out of the power of the Major Generalls, and restore us to the protection of the common law.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MUN AND HIS LOVE-MAKING.

1656–1660.

In May 1656 Edmund Verney returned home, a young man in his twentieth year. He was tall and handsome, but somewhat clumsily and heavily built, and his awkwardness of manner and slovenliness of dress were a great trouble to his precise and gentlemanlike father. 'Much more will be expected from Mun,' he writes, 'than from such youths as have gonn noe father then Oxford or Cambridg, or at most the Inns of Court.'

Never had Mary been more sadly missed than in this fresh chapter of the family life, when Sir Ralph had to make a home and a career for his eldest son. No one welcomed him back with the womanly love which mother and sister would have lavished upon him, no one was there to see that in taking a son's place at Claydon his habits did not clash with his father's; and so the home-coming was not as successful as it might have been, after the joy of the first meetings and greetings had subsided. Sir Ralph himself had been an ideal son, never thinking of his own amusements if he could share in Sir Edmund's duties and lighten his cares. Edmund arrived in the midst of the worries and vexations of the Decimation, but it did not occur to him that these things were any concern of his. He looked upon himself as the heir to a fine estate, and he felt annoyed when every request for money was met with a dismal recital of his grandfather's debts and his father's burdens. Careless of expense, and ignorant of business, Mun was far from appreciating the sacrifices Sir Ralph had made for his education,

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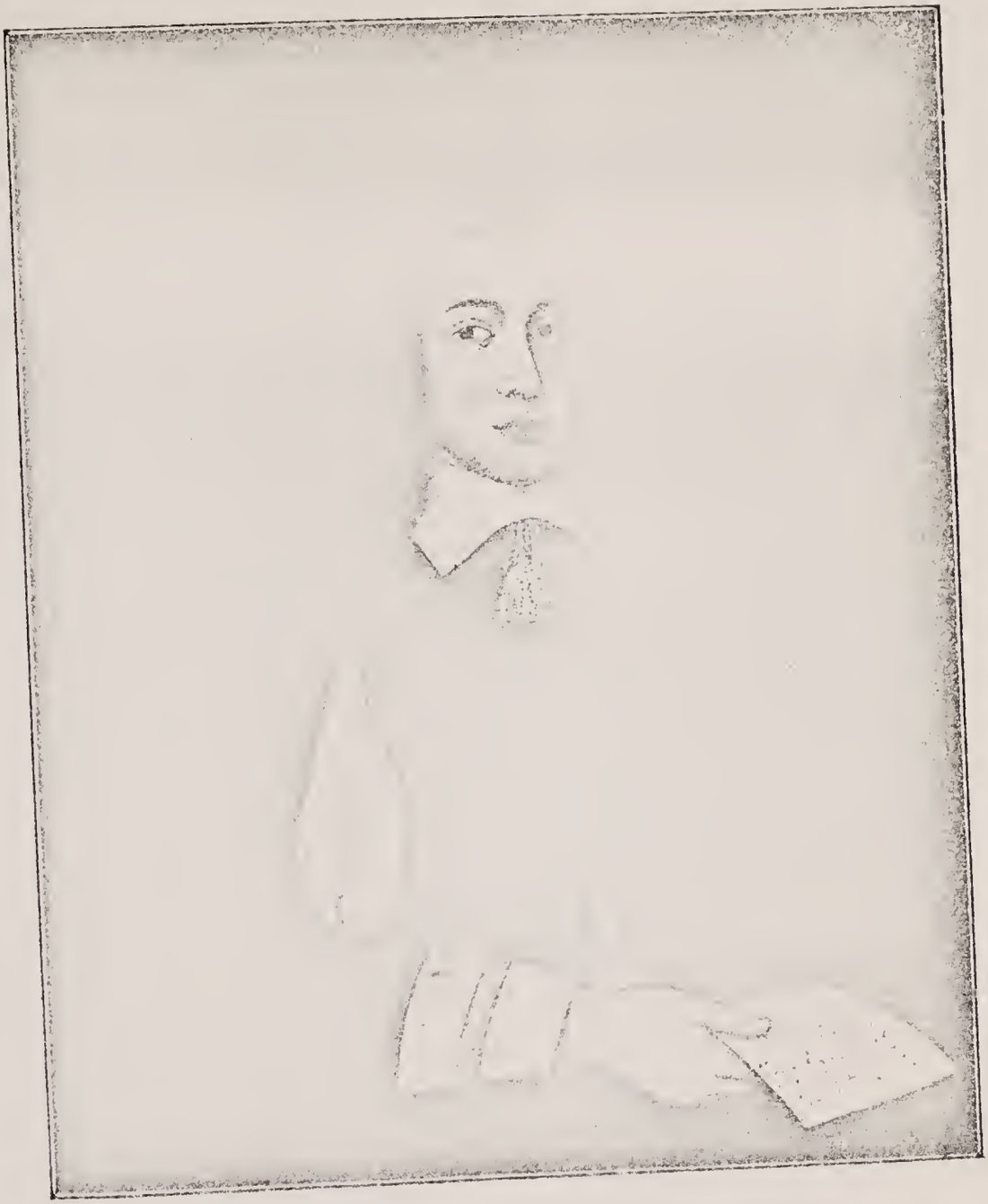

EDMUND VERNEY, ELDEST SON OF SIR RALPH VERNEY

in the days of his greatest poverty, or how hardly he now raised the 20*l.* or 50*l.* which slipped through the son's fingers so easily.

Sir Ralph was full of large schemes for the improvement of Claydon, in which Mun took but little interest, thinking, not unnaturally, that with less outlay in building and planting, his father might afford to give him a proper allowance, that he might appear as well dressed, and as well mounted, as the other young sparks who splashed up the mud at a fashionable hour in Hyde Park.

Sir Ralph justified himself as a father and landowner always does under these conditions. 'As for my buildings, I see I have already lost one great part of the contentment I tooke in them, which was that you should perceive that what money I did expend, was layd out *to your advantage*, to make the house more handsome and convenient for you and yours . . . I must confesse I shall not debarre myselfe of any expence that I thinke moderate, to supply any extravagancies that you either have or shall committ, and yet, if any misfortune should befall you, noe man liveing should more readily and cheerfully suffer with and for you.' Dec. 8, 1656.

The boy had his own vague ambitions, though he rarely confided them to Sir Ralph: 'I do positively affirme,' he wrote to his intimate friend Dr. Hyde, 'that hetherto my father hath not given me any education whereby I might be rendered accomplisht in body and mind; nay further, though I am naturally inclined to be that which the Italians call un Vertuoso, hee never did so much as countenance mee therein, but hath continually opposed me. Considering these premisses aforesaid my industrie will labour under a greate difficulty of acquiring a title above an honest elder brother, which now a dayes is accounted but little above a silly fellow, yet I think myselfe capable of deserving much better, and I hope without vanitie. . . . My father is courteous and kind enough to me . . . and seemes very well pleased with mee, and would be more yet, if I could dispose my humour to affect, what I hate, Rusticq matters and

effeminate things—all which aforesaid I do contemplate with some wonder.'

The relations and friends had only one course to recommend—in every letter written to welcome the lad of nineteen home, they wished that he might soon find a wife. Sir Ralph wearily reckoning up debts and interest, portions and mortgages, decimations and taxes (till he convinced himself that he had only 125*l.* a year to live upon), saw no way out of the family labyrinth except by his son's marriage with an heiress—maid or widow it mattered very little—but wealthy she must be, and she would, of course, be good. Of Sir Ralph's seven children two only were living, and after them Brother Tom was heir to Claydon; it was therefore a matter of dynastic importance to the large family circle that Edmund Verney should be suitably 'matched.' All the uncles and aunts began to bestir themselves, and Edmund's godmother, Lady Warwick, who in a previous stage of existence had provided him with a silver porringer and a light-blue figured satin coat, now produced a very young granddaughter with a portion, as an eligible bride. Roades was not to be left out of the chorus of wellwishers: 'I am glad Mr. Edmund Verney is com safe to London. I pray doe me so much favour as to present my sarvice to him. I could wish I were as Abraham's sarvant to provide a Rebecka for him, but sene I am not worthy of such a calling, I will pray to my god to bless him with a Rebecka in nature if not in name.' The great match-maker Aunt Sherard improves the occasion: 'My desir is that your son may meet with a good wife and a portion answerabal to your owne desires. . . . I hope both your selfe and son hath soe much resone and religgon in you, that you will pries that which is most to be valewd, which is vertue.'

June 3 1656.

June 10, 1656.

Mun took a languid interest in these projects; 'si je me mariois,' he wrote, 'ce que je n'ai pas encore envie de faire, je veux premierement voir quelques choses'; but when money was running low, marriage meant independence, as his father would be bound to make some separate provision for him, besides the promised wealth that his wife was to

bring with her. So being 'fancy free' he was ready to leave the choice of the particular heiress wholly to his father; 'mais je ne voudrois souiller mon sang, avec une creature de basse condition, pour avoir avec elle 100,000 livres de rente; j'aimerois mieux chercher ma fortune par mon espée, avec une fille noble et vertueuse.'

After spending a few months at Claydon, Mun announced his wish to live in London till he married; Sir Ralph regretted but did not oppose it; he himself was often up and down, and there were relations in town ready to be kind to his son. 'Methinkes Mun lives wonderful orderly here,' the Doctor reports. 'I doe not see that any one comrade hath been with him since he came. He keepes at home all day till candle light, and then we have his comppany till bed time and much more free and merry then formerly.' But Sir Ralph was uneasy to hear that at Mrs. Bellinger's, of the sign of the Eagle and Child (his lodgings near the Old Bailey), Mun was known by the aliases of Theodore Berry and Brewer, and that he had been heard of at Woolwich, and in Hertfordshire, when Sir Ralph had known nothing of such expeditions. The father complained that his indulgence was only abused. 'Mun, I see the same sunn that softens Wax, hardens clay, and, since tis soe (to be short with you), I shall considder you as little as you doe me'; the son retorted that he had asked for nothing unreasonable, 'mais c'est que vostre naturel est tel, que vous aimez à prolonger les choses.' Dec. 27, 1656.

Matters had reached this pitch, when on Christmas Day, 1656, the foolish lad wrote his father a letter 'that had been better unwritt'; Sir Ralph justly described it to be 'as false as insolent.' Deeply pained, he sent it with his answer to Dr. Denton, begging him to forward the one, and burn the other 'presently, for I would not have his folly knowne to anybody.' Dr. Denton had no weak indulgence for wrong-doing, but his sense of humour and his habitual self-command prevented his blundering into mere bursts of passion. Mun's letter was no surprise; the lad had shown it to him, when he had been pouring out his grievances. 'Being Jan. 21, 1657

horribly wroath,' Doctor writes, 'I did tell him that it was impossible but that you should highly resent it. . . . I am thus far beholdinge to him, he heard me patiently and I think doth not take it ill from me though I spare him as little as I doe others. . . . I had a very kind letter from him last night—but maugre all his courtshipps its my business this day to study ugly bitter currish things to say to him at night, for if I understand him rightly, he is soe to be treated, and will worke more on him then great reason if contrary to his sense. Courage, Monsr; you may be happy togeather for all this; it's but a peccadillo, and if you master him here he is your owne for ever.'

Dr. Denton knew that the father, though his heart ached with love and disappointment, was in danger of driving his son from him by the stern expression of his righteous displeasure. He pleaded with him to treat Mun liberally in money matters, and said all the kind and wise things he could on the lad's behalf. But Mun must have had a bad time of it when they met that night 'at a taverne.' The Doctor spoke to him plainly about his wrong courses, and pictured to him what would have happened if ever his father had dared to speak so wrongly and disrespectfully to his grandfather: 'after this rate was our discourse and yett . . . we parted very very lovingly.' Sir Ralph was not appeased; 'for his deare mother's sake I would gladly love him but hee will not let me,' said the poor wounded father. Dr. Denton spoke to Mun again: 'We had a smart bout last night till past 11 o'clock . . . his letter to you I hope will be full of douceur with out a stinge at the tayle of it. He had as good as I could give him, and I please myselfe to thinke I was cock of him and doe beleeve that now he wishes his finger had been in the fire when he writt it, yet I find it is a hard chapter to recant it.'

Jan. 29, 1657.

Edmund wrote the next day to his father: 'I am exceedingly afflicted to have said anything that hath caused your anger, wherefore if you vouchsafe to signifie the contrary by the next, you will make my hart leape for joy.'

Sir Ralph thought this a wholly inadequate apology;

it was not his anger, but his son's misconduct that was in question. He wrote back stiffly: 'When I see a submission and sorrow more suited to your crime, I thank God I can forgive it, though you have most highly and strangly provoked your Father. R. V.' Feb. 1, 1657.

The little folded note, marked by Sir Ralph as returned to him undelivered, lies now beside the Doctor's letter. That unwearied peace-maker was bent upon winning for Mun a freer and more gracious pardon:

'Seeing you left it to me,' he wrote, 'to keepe or deliver the letter, I cannot soe soone forgett the Councill I gave you—that if he wrote to you in such a way as that you might with Honour to Paternal dignity and power, embrace him againe without further ravellinge into the story of disagreement then to doe it, and to doe it hartily, and to returne him kindness even with London measure.' He warns his father that if he is to play 'Thomas Aquinas and distinguish nicely,' he will drive his son to justify himself. 'It is much the better way in my opinion to take every reasonable excuse to be friends without words . . . though he doth not tell mee soe, yett I know he must want money . . . he cannot live like a chamoleon, therefore let it be your glory to passe by offences and the sooner the more honorable. I have but this one touch more and I have done. Suppose you should stand uppon a submission more suitable to his crime, and he should not answere your expectacon, I will not aske you what can you doe to him (for I know you may do what you will) but what will you doe to him? You cannot but suffer with him: even your makinge of it publique will be a torment to you, and to take notice of it, and not goe through stitch with it, it will be an allay to your soveraignty. Go, kisse and be friends, which is the advice of W^m^ D.' Feb. 5, 1657.

One or two loving notes had arrived meanwhile from Mun, anxious about his father's continued silence. Sir Ralph was not a man to forgive or forget easily; the very steadfastness of his nature was against it: but he could sacrifice his pride and his own opinion at the bidding of so

Feb. 9, 1657. true a friend: 'Well Dr you may doe what you will with me, and now you have a sufficient trial of it. I have written Mun another letter in another straine. I have not at all touched upon the businesse, for I confesse I could not doe it without some such sharpnesse as would not please you, therefore I rather chose to let it sleepe in silence.' He pours out to the Doctor all the good advice he is not allowed to give his son, to whom 'God grant more witt and grace hereafter.' To Mun himself he writes affectionately and naturally, asking after his health, and about the trees he had ordered from Holland, promising to supply him with money, and abstaining from a single word of reproach for the past or of warning for the future. Mun felt the generosity of this silence, and Sir Ralph reaped his reward. Small differences of opinion arose again at times, when their interests seemed to be conflicting, but in the intimate and unbroken correspondence of the succeeding thirty years no such letter as the one 'that had been better unwritt' ever interrupted the affectionate relations between them.

Feb. 15, 1657. Sir Ralph writes again cheerfully about a favourite dog of Mun's at Claydon. 'Madame is courted by all the currs in Towne, she hath chosen the ugliest of them all, soe that shortly heere is likely to bee a rare Breed. Tell me how your Bodies fit you. Adieu, your loving father R. V.' Herr Schott had come to London from Utrecht, and the 'bodies,' at 30*l.* the pair, which Mun still wore, were the heaviest of his expenses.

The Doctor is anxious to introduce his great-nephew into good society, but he finds his clothes sadly shabby for polite visits. London is very full and smart, and 'tis generally talked and beleeved that within few daies the Protector shall be crowned. Mun is in most pitifull equipage, noe trappings at all.' Sir Ralph 'must supply and supply and supply, which is and shall be the burden of all my songs till it be done.'

Feb 14, 1657. The Doctor gives an amusing account of their visit to 'Barronet Luckyn's,' where the old man fell in love with the daughter of the house if the youth did not. 'Havinge beene longe harpinge uppon an unpleasant stringe, I cannot with-

out joy tell you that I am labouringe for a more merry spinne, and to that end Mun and I and Mr. Mainell went last night about 6 o'clock, a wooinge, where in earnest I saw her that pleased me very more than ordinary well, yea extraordinary well. A pure virgin eighteen years old, tall, slender, straight, handsome, with as much sweetness in her aspect as I know not more anywhere, so that out of my small skill in phisiognomy, she must needs be well humoured. I saw her only in her hood, so that I cannot tell the colour of her haire, but I ghesse it to be towards flaxen; if I might pick and choose among all I know at first sight, I know none like her. Before I parted I said what I thought was fitt, and told her that if Sir William Luckin had any services to command me, I would [wait] on him when and where he pleased.'

Sir William Luckyn of Messing Hall belonged to an Essex family, which had intermarried with the Grimstons, and Sir William's second son eventually succeeded to Gorhambury, where Sir Ralph and his wife had so often visited Lord and Lady Sussex. Lady Luckyn sent 'her sister on purpose to dine at the Doctor's to see Mun and make enquiry of him and of the estate.' Doctor 'gave her ner lesson,' but 'has heard no more since.'

'Dear Ralph,' wrote Dr. Denton. 'In the first place I am of your opinion, that I am a person of very great judgment and soe great that I cannot erre, and now being seated in my infallible chaire, I tell you that I never thought I could doe any business soe well as your worshipp, especially your owne, as this of Luckin's is, and therefore a few instructions would have beene welcome, but let that passe. I have done what I can to keep the affaire alive, and that it may not chill on our part; my lady is still ill. Sir William's man told my cozen that his master would scruple at noe porcion betweene 5 & 10,000*l*., soe hee could have an estate answerable, especially a good lusty, present maintenance. As to this point, a little of your mind would do noe hurt, and I shall not looke on it at all as any affront to my infallible judgment. You must never thinke in such a March 12, 1657.

matter to truck and higgle with 100*l.* per an: for 1,000*l.* money. Certainly its fitt Mun should have one suit to make him looke like a gentleman, which he hath not. I thinke it would be a hard vy betweene his best suit and my serge d' 8d. Besides he has noe trappings,' he repeats, 'as hat, stockins, shoes, &c., en la mode.'

Sir Ralph does not rate his son's taste or his personal attractions very high—'Mun is not at all nice either in point of Bewty or of Breeding, nor must that woeman bee soe that marries him'; but fair as Elizabeth Luckyn is, Mun cannot be stirred to any enthusiasm about her. He writes to his

Feb. 19, 1657. father: 'Mon oncle . . . m'amena dans Hoburne, et là me donna une veue innocente de la damoiselle, laquelle je n'ai pas voulu presumer de declarer, qu'elle me plaise ou deplaise, mais ai reservé cela à vostre jugement, car ma jeunesse n'est pas si folle et inconsiderée que d'entreprendre une acte de cette consequence sur ma cervelle seule.' Sir Ralph is

Feb. 23, 1657. pleased with this proper attitude of mind, and will 'the more willingly comply in anything that's reasonably desired; and if it bee your fortune to marry her, God grant shee may bee as discreet and vertuous as your mother, and make you noe worse a husband then your loving father.' Mun would not, for his own choice, marry at present; he is seized with a desire to continue his education, and he sends for his music books from Claydon: 'J'ai pris Kersey pour m'enseigner la Richemetique, à 20^{s} par mois, et il ne vient que 3 fois la septmaine; les arts et les sciences sont bien cheres icy, ils ont besoing d'estre bonnes.' The same terms are charged by masters of the violin and the lute.

Lady Hobart now attacks Sir Ralph about Mun's

March 5, 1657. clothes: 'truly I am much ashamed to see how he goos, not at all lick your son, for he has nothing neu lick any other young man, neither hat nor clos, nor lining, for he has suits I dar say your man wars beter. Pray let me beg of you to let me mack him but 6 shurts, and half a dosen bands and cofs, and put him a letill into the town fason, but all shall be plan, and I will dres his legs, all ribens ar left at the brechis, so that is much saved. I will deu nothing

progally [prodigally] but net, I will have but on sut. I hop if you war hear you wold as much dislick it as I deu; I look on him as the top of my kindred, and if he war one set in a net way I am confident he wold kep it, he wold lick it very wil war it got all to his hand, but his genios does not ly to lock after it; I am confident I could make him a sparck. He tacks anything I say wil, and I chid him for going so carlesly.' Sir Ralph has a crushing reply to make: 'Now for Mun's linnen, if hee weare his night sheirts when hee goes into company, neither he nor they can be commended by you or any other that sees them, but my Aunt Dr. knowes hee had very good whole sheirts and 2 halfe sheirts made within this moneth, which I am sure canot yet bee worne out; but if they were he hath not wanted money to supply any such defect. He hath had four score and ten pounds for this London journey, but cozen I pray doe not speake of this, for I know tis fitter and better to have mee thought a hard Father then hee a simple sonne.' To Dr. Denton he writes: 'Easter terme is the fittest time to buy him cloathes, for then all fashions alter; but if the wooing goe on sooner, then tis fit to cloath him presently.'

Dancing lessons from Moulin, a fashionable French master, are strongly recommended; Mun agrees—'affin d'avoir une meilleure mine et grace dans mon portement, et une meilleure addresse en abordant ou accostant une personne'; but his steel bodies make dancing almost too painful, although 'il n'y a personne qui puisse endurer une peine continuelle avec plus de patience que moy, car j'y ay esté accoustumé toutte ma vie.' The luckless lad has again run out of funds: 'A certain verse in holy scripture says, he who is wanting in one point fails in all—now I am in want of money, and certainly of everything else also.'

The young lady had not again been visited; Lady Luckyn had been ill, and Edmund had been 'in the hands of Mr. Wiseman, the surgeon.' 'Truly I might compare my afflictions to Job's,' he wrote to his father. 'I have taken purges and vomits, pills and potions, I

have been blooded, and I doe not know what I have not had, I have had so many things.' Sir William Luckyn is still inclined to treat: 'He seemes to be mighty fond of his daughter, and talks much of good allowance that they may live plentifully in their youth';

March 5, 1657. but Dr. Denton writes 'that they have heard of your noble Bro. Tom, and that your sisters live but in a meane condicion, which is not very acceptable newes.' He is order-

March 20, 1657. ing a new suit for Mun 'at a very short warning'—'because he is to meet his Mrs. to-morrow in the Temple Garden,' and he is earnestly trying 'to mend his addresse which is but very indifferent,' as well as to put him 'in better cloaths.' Mun submits to the clothes, but fails to put on even the decent semblance of a lover; 'I beleeve myselfe of that temper,' he writes to his own friend Dr. Hyde, 'that I can easily break off, without heavy sorrow, when I see I cannot love with any conveniency.' 'I am of your opinion that you will not run mad for love,' Hyde replies, 'yet I must still tell you that it is a passion not to be played with, neither ought you to presume on your owne strength soe farre as to try it.' He advises that Edmund should agree with his father about settlements 'before you have loved and liked, or else vast and horrid inconveniences may follow.'

Sir Ralph, who might grumble, but who did everything that was generous, had commissioned the Doctor to buy his

June 18, 1657. son a saddle-horse. Prices are very high in town. 'There is scarce anythinge worth looking uppon under 25*l*., and those but indifferent neyther but Doctor will prog and

July 4, 1657. prowl.' He has been asked 100*l*. for a gelding, 'they pack them so fast into France that now it is but aske and have even double their value.' He 'could fill a volume with stories of hunting after Jades in Hyde Park and Smithfield,' but he gets one at last for 16*l*. 10*s*.

It was a great happiness to Mun this summer to renew 'his infant acquaintance and friendship with Peg and Moll Eure,' and to be introduced to Peg Fust. Mun, standing about in Lady Luckyn's drawing-room, in a stiff new suit,

beside the flaxen beauty in a hood, cudgelling his brains for compliments and unable to recall anything but the Doctor's caustic remarks upon his manners, was an utterly different creature from Mun chatting with this trio of charming cousins, treated by them with frank, sisterly kindness. There are no dreadful 'treaties' in the background, and he is quite at his ease. They have a host of childish memories in common of their life in France, which they recall to each other, and explain to Peg Fust. Margaret and Mary can give him the latest gossip from Blois, of Prevost, of Madame Testard, of the dancing-master and the doctor, and others who were tiresome enough in reality, but as interesting to discuss afterwards as the characters of a story-book. They remember the fun of the fair, with all Luce's prudent anxieties, and the pleasures of the grape-gathering; but they agree that there is nothing after all so delightful as an English summer, and plan frequent meetings at Claydon and Whitsondine. There is an exchange of notes when the cousins separate, and Mun earnestly desires a continuance of the intimacy 'which began in ower most innocent and tender yeares.' The wilful beauty, Peg, 'Pussy's Mad Eure' as she calls herself, had just refused a very eligible suitor, but she chooses to be specially gracious to Mun. She looks forward to their next meeting; 'wee will be passing merry; Peg Fust, though it is not usuall with hir to adore strangers, tho very disarving, it [yet] realy she saith that ther was something of exterordinary sivility in you which makes her much glory in your acquaintance.' Such jokes are not at all in Mary's line, but she writes a proper little note of cousinly civility. 'Sir, I cannot but esteem it a very great honour to renew that acquaintance with you which time and far distance hath worne something out of our memories, but cannot blot out the obligations I have ever receaved from you, especially the last which I must ever owne as a very great favor and beseech you to bring these impertinencies as low as I would doe any thought of being lesse then, Sir, your most humble servant, Mary Eure.'

Miss Luckyn [1] showing as little zeal as Mun did for any further interviews, Sir Ralph made another serious attempt at a 'match' for his son, and this time 'the not impossible she' was Alianora Tryon. Her ancestor, Peter Tryon, was a Protestant who had fled from Alva's persecution in the Netherlands. The girl's grandfather, Sir Samuel Tryon, made a baronet in 1620, bought the property of Halstead from old Sir Thomas Gardiner, Cary Verney's father-in-law, and was High Sheriff of Essex in 1650. His widow, Elizabeth Eldred, married Sir Edward Wortley, Lady Warwick's brother, and report said that as guardian Sir Edward had wasted the estate, and had arranged a marriage between his little stepson and his niece, Eleanor Lee, Lady Warwick's daughter by her first husband, for whom Sir Samuel had no liking. Two children, Samuel and Alianora, were born of this marriage.

Alianora, mercifully called Ellen or Nell in daily life, was staying with her young cousin, Sir Harry Lee (one of Margaret Eure's many suitors), and his mother, now Countess of Rochester. Visits to Ditchley were among the happiest memories of Sir Ralph's childhood. It was in itself a liberal education for Mun to see the fine house and its treasures, and it was delightful to think of renewing such old intimacies. Sir Ralph was as much charmed with Mistress Tryon as the Doctor had been with Mistress Luckyn. He

Aug. 10, 1657

wrote 'to the Countesse of Warwick. Madame,—Finding that the young Lady was come to Ditchley on Tuesday the 28th [July] my selfe and sonne went thether to attend her, where we had soe free and favourable a reception both from my Lady Rochester and Sir Harry Lee that we stayed till the Mounday after; and, had I yeelded to my sonn's desires, wee had still been there. For he is soe much taken with mistress Trion that if you please to suffer him to bee her servant, he will ever acknowledge the favour. . . . The truth is, Madame, she is every way soe well accomplished, and carries her selfe soe well and soe discreetly (even beyond her age) that she hath already soe charmed us both. . . . I

[1] Elizabeth Luckyn m. Geoffrey Nightingale, of Kneesworth.

shall be confident that Heaven hath a perticuler blessing in store for mee and for my family, in providing such a person for my sonne; who though hee is noe courtier, nor noe complimentall man, yett I hope hee will endeavour by the reallity and constancy of his affection to make some recompence for his want of ceremonie; and if my care or kindnesse can contribute anything towards her happinesse, my obligations to your Ladyshippe will be a sufficient Tye, to make me doe my utmost, and (if it were possible), even beyond the power of, Madame, your most humble, most faithful, and most obliged servant, R. V.' Beautifully balanced phrases, but a little premature.

Lady Warwick replies at great length, with real affection for 'Nell.' She first refers to 'that friendship that was many years begonne among us,' and continues, 'I finde by your letter that your selfe and sone have very good thoughts of my grandchild; I must thanke you for it, for i doubt she cannot desarve itt, being so yonge and having apparede so lettill in the worlde, that she must nedes be wantinge in many things yett. I have righton to hur and tolde hur that i very much lyke of this mach for hur. I should not ventir hur so sone into the worlde but that I am confident you will supply hur in all that wants, and be by your advise and councell bouth father, mother and all, for she is younge and I hope of so good an nature that you may fram hur to what you can desire. P.S. My daughter Rochister sath as much good of your sone as can be sade, and I hade a letter from my grandchilde, and I find she lykes him very will but hath not confidence i believe to till mee she is in love with him, but I presume hur lykeinge will increse daily, . . . your sone cannot but bee very good, cominge from cuch a stoke of goodness.' My Lady Rochester is equally cordial: 'For your sonne I may say it without flattering him, hee appeares too mee so excellent a young man, and carried himselfe with that prudence and discretion all the while of his being at Dichley both to his M.rs and everybody els, that hee must in justice gaine both my high esteeme and all that doe belong too mee; you are strangly hapy

Aug. 25, 1657.

Aug. 29, 1657.

in him and truly I hope you wille be in her when she is yours.'

In the beginning of September, a childish little letter, much disfigured by blots, arrived from the young lady in which she tells 'Mr. Verney' that he has rated her merits too highly, 'yet I must needs say I see soe much of integrity in all your professions, this littell time I have knowne you, that I am bound to confes I have reson to acknoledg you have obledg mee to bee, sir, your friend and servant, Elen Tryon.'

Sept. 8, 1657. Sir Ralph has ordered Mun some more courting clothes, the Doctor has chosen a suit; 'there are other fasshioned Ribands worn beside these, but fitt for none but footmen or a Morrice dauncer, and would not have pleased grave Monsr Mun, and therefore I gave my vote for these.' Edmund is honestly anxious to play his part, but he does not hurry back to Ditchley; there were no memories of Blois to facilitate conversation with Alianora, and the 'home-keeping' girl had but 'homely wits.' All through the summer the details of the marriage settlements were being discussed between Sir Ralph and Mr. John Cary, who conducted the business on the lady's side; there is a whole bundle of papers at Claydon of proposals and counter-proposals; and among them Sir Edward Wortley's promise 'to give my neece Ellenor Tryan, my Wife's Grandchilde, five hundred pounds, and a hundred pounds a yeare for five yeares,' her eventual portion being 5,000*l*.

In October, after a very sickly summer, Sir Ralph has his house full of guests; 'you need not invite man, woman, child nor horse to Claydon,' said the Doctor, 'they'l come without sending for.' Sir Ralph writes to Mr. Cary to

Oct. 13. excuse Mun's absence from 'his mistress.' 'I have had very many of my kindred heere for 10 or 12 daies together, and divers of them not having seene my sonne since his infancie pretend they came now heather purposely to be acquainted with him, so that he is still theire prisoner heere, or else he had not been such a stranger at Ditchley. Yesterday one coachfull went away, but returne againe next

weeke, and then I beeleeve they will be gon togeather, in the meane time I hope his stay heere will not bee misinterpreted by any, since as the case stands it cannot hansomly bee avoyded.' Alianora's peace of mind was not disturbed. 'For Mistress Tryon,' writes Mr. Cary, 'I can discover nothing of her mind against what is desired by your selfe and us heare, only she is youngue and not so fixt as persons of more yeares. I therefore much mind not every little picket of hers.'

Mrs. Sherard had another heiress in reserve, in her own county, should more genteel matches fail: 'an ordinary man's dafter; her father was a kind of a farmer but he hath given her a kind of breeding, as I hear he hath had her taught to sing, and to play, and to dance, but I beleeve it is all olde fationed. Her father will give her five thousand pound, and hath but on dafter more, and she is sickly and never licke to mary, and if not, shee will have more than enouf, for it is beleved her father is worth above 30 thousand pounds, and dooth daily incres in welth. I hear shee is not but of a very good disposition.' Cousin Drake has also a proposal: 'Here is a match for your sonn, Mr. Wilson's daughter of Surrey (formerly a cittizen) that I think worthy your consideration; they offer 5,500*l*.'

The autumn passed away, and the fashionable world was beginning to think of going up to town for the winter season. Mrs. Sherard allowed Peg and Mall to accept 'Queen Katherine's' hospitable invitation to spend it with her in Covent Garden. The meetings with Mun were soon resumed, and Peg wrote to Sir Ralph that they only needed his good company to be quite happy. 'Dr's Nancie,' aged seventeen, was not the least merry of the party, and the signatures of the four young people occur together as witnesses to a bond signed at the Doctor's house.

Nancy had attracted a suitor a year before; nothing had come of it but one of the Doctor's jokes; he wrote to Sir Ralph: 'We had need call a councell for marryinge and givinge in marriage, you for your sis, she for hers, and I for mine, who am earnestly sollicited for my girle by one Nov. 20, 1656.

Mr. Piggott, for his son who is of Graies Inne . . . his estate is within a mile of Newport in Shropshire.'

Mrs. Sherard was too careful a mother to allow her daughters to go out in London, even with their Uncle and Aunt, without giving minute directions concerning them. For all rules of conduct she refers them to Sir Ralph, whose standard of taste and propriety she rightly considered a much higher one than Mrs. William Denton's. She has no anxieties about the gentle Mary, whose manner repels suitors, and who, with her great affection for Peg, is content to wait upon her sister's triumphs. But for Peg she entreats

Nov. 16, 1657.

Sir Ralph to 'order hir as you thinke fit. I woold not by any means parswad hir to any as shee licks not—but pray tacke hir off of saying shee will and then shee will not, for soe shee did about Str[ickland]. I know non can manig hir lick you, and shee will bee free and tell you her mind. I can say but as I did befor, I leave her holly to your selfe and the Dr for to treat of the conditions, and shee to ples hir selfe in the man. I know shee will loocke for a good estate, else I should not leave it soe holy to hir.'

Peg Eure's 'she will and she will not' had already brought her family into trouble. Lord Strickland was 'highly dissatisfied' with the breaking off of the alliance with his kinsman. Lord Eure took up his quarrel; and was very 'fierce'; 'it seems he fell foul of the Dr in open coorte,' and they had a 'smart bout.' But it was so difficult to quarrel with the Doctor that they made it up again at their next meeting. Mrs. Sherard still favoured the Strickland suit; 'The greatest advantig of all,' she writes, 'is thay air extream good, which I dow more value then all the other conveniences for I dessyer to mach my children wher they may have examples of pyatey, for the world is very bad, and youth is apet to goe astray.' She considers that Peg has treated Mr. Strickland badly. 'I have not disgestid the unhandsome breacking off of that mach, althoe my owne inocense was such as nothing can be more then it.' Sir Ralph had always favoured Robert Cotton's suit, and Luce, who had known his devotion

to Peg at Blois, 'is a maine stickler' for Cotton. The young man himself found Mrs. Sherard's 'admirable Daughter soe much improved since I sawe her last in France as I finde that that affection which I thought to bee extraordinarie greate, was but the beginning of a much more violent one.' He had been allowed to visit Whitsondine in the autumn of 1655, but Mrs. Sherard had never fancied him. 'We aier off of Cotton,' she writes; 'wee may ingage in som other plas without acceptiones.' Meanwhile 'Mistress Eure hath declared, not only against Mr Strickland, but against all other that have father or mother, or have binne contrary to the side her father was of,' in the war, and Luce begs Sir Ralph to do his best 'to medigate my lady's anger against her daur.' 'She hath divers times said, tho not to me,' wrote Mrs. Sherard, 'that if I should carry her to the Church she woold tell them ther, that shee would not mary them if they had either father or mother . . . you may imagine me to be in some trobull, but I hope to have comfort in the rest of my sweet children. Godallmightey give his gras & that alters nateur.' Nov 3, 1656.

Mr. Cotton, having been so often extinguished by Mrs. Sherard, was persuaded by an aunt to transfer his attentions to another heiress, daughter of Sir Thomas Salusbury of Llewenny, and just when Peg was relenting towards him, Mrs. Sherard hears with very unreasonable displeasure that 'Mr Cotton is marryed. I woold faine know whithr it be to his 7,000 pound lady.'

The Doctor was overwhelmed with proposals: 'Sir Thos Ingram treats for Mr Slingsby, Sir Tho: Hatton for his sonne, & one Barronett Williams is on foot alsoe, but which hare to hunt I know not.' Luce Sheppard reports that: 'Sir Thomas liveth within 4 miles to Mr Cuts, in 5 miles of Cambridg; the mother yet liveing, not above 2 or 3 and forty: there is 6 or 7 children in all. The young gent: not very tall, but well shaped for his height.' Peg gave her mother '10 words for one,' nobody but Sir Ralph could manage her—'As I take it, its very convenient,' writes the Doctor, 'for the Worshipful Dominie Politick to be here Nov 5, 1657.

when Peg Eure comes upp to be woed, therefore prepare for it.' 'She is an uncertaine creature to deale withall; noe faith in villanous woman. She came upp with as much joy & resolution to have Mr Strickland as could be, and now she flaggs wonderfully.' Lord St. John's son was also in question, but he was 'contracted' soon after 'to one of 13 years old.'

Mrs. Sherard wrote (about Dec. 6) thanking Sir Ralph for a good report of her daughters. 'I shall licke them the betr my selfe, for I know you aier betor abull to Juge of them then I am. I have tacked som painies with them to put as good prinsiobles in them as I am capabull to dow, and I hope God will give his blessing with it. I hir by the by that Moll hath a great mind to see a play; if they be as they have bin this many eyers [years] tuged to peisuses at them, I shall not licke them, soe I have refred hir to you. If you think as she may goe with safty, I am well content, soe shee goes with thos persones as tis fit for hir, I believe peg had rather goe A visit.' Mrs. Sherard's anxiety lest her daughter should be tugged to pieces by the crowds at the theatre suggests that such amusements were coming into fashion again.

In the midst of all this pleasant intercourse a crisis came in Mun's easy-going life probably as surprising to himself as to those about him; he fell seriously and desperately in love. The change wrought in his character was immediate, it was no longer a question of a shadowy female figure whom Uncle Doctor or Sir Ralph might recommend, he took his life into his own hands; there was only one face and one voice now in the world for him—the face and voice of Mary Eure. The two older men who were managing the 'matching' so comfortably, with no gusts of passion to complicate the making of treaties, must have been startled; but Sir Ralph, who had himself known what true love was, may not have been displeased to see his son shake off his apathy. At any rate they accepted the position; Sir Ralph was left to make peace as best he could with Lady Warwick and Sir Edward

Wortley,[1] and Dr. Denton gallantly opened the fresh cam- Dec. 7, 1657.
paign by a letter to his sister Mrs. Sherard, which probably crossed the one she last wrote to Sir Ralph, in happy unconsciousness of this fresh complication. 'Mun Verney hath lately declined a very good match propounded for him by his father; whereat wee both wondred not a little. After much enquiry, we found his reason was because he had absolutely fixed and settled already his affection upon your Mall, which he thought most proper to be communicated unto you in the first place. Wee represented unto him your aversenesse of bestowing your daughter in your familye, he says he hath considered that, and hath satisfied himselfe in that point, [and] that he beleeves he can satisfy you . . . I offer this to your consideration and wayte your answer.'

This opening of the negotiations was evidently undertaken with much deliberation. The rough copy of this letter is partly in Sir Ralph's hand, and partly in Dr. Denton's, and there had been a discussion whether the young lady should be referred to as 'your daughter Mary,' or as she was usually called 'Mall' by the two elderly men who had acted so kind a part towards the girl since her father's death. Mrs. Sherard replied in general terms that her daughter was averse to the married state, and implied that when her two little girls were under Sir Ralph's care at Blois, he had somewhat abused her confidence by planning this match. Sir Ralph solemnly denies that he has ever planned or desired it, 'for I know shee deserves the best of men and Fortunes . . . Tis Dec. 21, 1657.
true I find him much more taken with her, then ever I thought he could have been with any woeman; and I cannot blame him, for were I of his years, I myselfe should bee his Rivall.'

Some coyness on the maiden's part was only to be expected, but when the marriage was so desirable on both sides in point of character, income, and position, Sir Ralph seems

[1] Alianora Tryon married Sir Richard Franklyn, Bart., of Moor Park, Hants, and eventually, when her brother Sir Samuel died unmarried in 1671, became a considerable heiress.

to have had no doubt that so ardent a suitor as his son would eventually win the lady. But, alas, Mary had altered as well as Edmund, and the cousin who had been so welcome a friend and playmate, became positively repulsive to her as a lover—a change of feeling which he could not be expected either to credit or to understand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

'THE CORROSIVE OF A DENIALL.'

1657–1660.

On Christmas Day, 1657, Edmund came of age, but in the unsettled state of the times, and of his own prospects, no family festivities seem to have marked his birthday. The opening of the New Year, 1658, which was to bring him so much suspense and sorrow, found him in London ill with measles and a complication of cold, cough, and ague. He writes anxious letters to Dr. Denton about the matter nearest his heart. Aunt Sherard's scruples seem to him very far fetched: 'she said she could not be satisfied in point of kindred, then the world being wyde, she would not venture her conscience upon a disputable point, besides that she had noe mind to part with her daughter as long as she lived.' He wants the Doctor's help and counsel. Sir Ralph uses an argument which sounds strangely in our ears, the drift of his long letter being that if Mun would not or could not find a wife, he might be driven to marry again. Mun replies in low spirits; Aunt Sherard has been in town, but is sending her girls home; he is only too anxious to be married—to Mary; Eleanor Tryon's humours and deportment had been very disagreeable to him on a nearer acquaintance (which by the by was entirely an afterthought): his father sees now that he *is* capable of a real and deep attachment, whereupon he relapses into a recital of Mary's charms; Sir Ralph need never think of marriage if it depends upon his son's devotion: he hints that it would be disastrous to Claydon to have to furnish fortunes for a second family, and he concludes with a reference at once

politic and affectionate to 'ma chere mère defunte,' whose large fortune he is sure his father would not wish to leave away from her own children.

The girls were now perversely determined to make fun of Edmund, but were quite devoted to Sir Ralph, and Mary Eure the night before leaving town appealed to him to come to their aid; Margaret had been once again sought in marriage, by a 'son of Sir Thomas Danby, a Knight and Baronet of the North,' a match which her mother thought so desirable that she was not inclined to tolerate in Margaret the objections she allowed Mary to urge against a lover equally unacceptable. 'Sir,' wrote Mary to Sir Ralph, 'I must begg of you to be att Whitsondine as soone as possible your occasions will give you leave, for my Mother is much displeased att my sister for refusing this Mr. Danby, and if you doe not come to make her peace with her mother shee will be utterly undon. Sir, I hope you will pardon my strange rude letres, for my part I shall pray to God with all my hart that I may see you very sudenly at Whitsondine, for I am sure I shall doe noing butt crie as long as my Mother is so angry with my sister and I cannot hope for any peace till you come.' Mary no longer concludes with 'my sarvice to my cousan Edmund.' A few days later she rejoices that Sir Ralph had not undertaken a 'durty Journey' at her desire, 'for God be blessed my sister has so well considered with her self, that shee has given all possible satisfaction to my Mother's desire who never said one word of it to her since shee came from London, and truly I found my mother's cariedge to my sister much otherwayes then I could have expected . . . so that I could not be satisfied without imparting to you my extream Joy who beg your silence for this and my former lettre.' Mrs. Sherard believes that Peg 'sores highe'; she objects not to the 'feutir fortune,' but to the present maintenance that Mr. Danby can settle upon her: 'she hath now bin 12 wickes in towne and hath good acquaintance and bin in much company, and I have not hurd of any mach that hath bin ofered that is soe good as this is . . . and in all this four yeares

and a halfe that shee hath bin in ingland excepting that of Sir Harry Le, I know of no ofers as hath bin worth the accepting.' Mrs. Sherard might have been letting a furnished house, and Mun may be forgiven for doubting whether her objections to parting with a daughter were insuperable.

Mrs. Sherard writes again from Whitsondine in high good humour when Peg has given 'her free consent for me to treat,' and to do her justice she believes that Mr. Danby has much to recommend him besides his estate, which is 'very considerable.' 'Such a man as he is, is not esily to be found, for he hath a good deale of wit, and of a good understanding and a discreet person. . . . Had I sought all ingland I thinke I could not have found one as woold have shewted with my Dafteres Disposition soe well as this will dow, for he is free from all vice as far as I can lerne; his governor in his family was one D^r^ Binacombe, he had bin one of the Kinges Chaplines. . . . I have bin told by thos as had it out of his owne mouth, that he is a great admirer of him,' &c. &c. Sir Ralph is glad to hear that 'Peg has returned to her obedience,' and hopes she will entrust to her mother all the pecuniary part of the business. Mrs. Sherard retorts sharply that there is no reason to praise Peg's obedience, for she has had none of it in this affair, 'and as for her trusting of me to loocke into her estat . . . If shee cannot live of 2,000 I beleeve ten thousand will not satisfie her; all I find as shee desires it for, is but to spend it uppon her vanities, which will macke her account the hevier at the day of judgment. In my esteeme an honist ghentilman with 2,000 a yeare is richies enoufe; if he hath that I shall be well satisfied, and soe will all resonabull peopel.' She does not pretend that Mr. Danby is an attractive person, she has seen many a man 'more modish and more taking than himselfe,' but she feels sure he will bear with Peg's humours, having 'discretion enoufe and good nateur.'

Sir Ralph treated the wayward girl with a courtesy to which her mother never condescended. 'Deare cozen,' he wrote when Mrs. Sherard and Peg had fallen out

more violently than usual, 'I confesse I can not commend your resolution. . . . I will not argue it with you now, when I see you next wee will chat about it. But what ever you doe in that, I know you are too discreet & too good to diminish any of that respect & duty thats due unto your Mother. Let all your words and actions be milde & humble & with submission unto her, for that's the way to regaine her favour, and therby your owne happiness. Beleeve me, cozen, there is not a better-natured Woeman liveing, nor can a Mother bee more tender or affectionate to a childe then shee hath been to you, nor more carefull of a Fortune then shee hath been of yours; and though perhapps, shee often chides & tells you plainly of your little faults, & with such an eagernesse as possibly you may conceive too much for such small matters, yet your back hath been no sooner turned but I have observed her taking twenty occations to commend you and thanke God for you, as one of her greatest blessings.' Peg Fust sided with her aunt, and thought Peg Eure too dainty. Mr. Danby, she says, 'is very free from that fashionable vise of being a good felow. . . . Richer are to be had, if she can get them, but a siveler sober man, I thinck is hardly to be found.'

Nancy Denton too claimed her godfather's help to coax her mother, as she wanted an allowance; her father was willing she should have 30*l.*; 'Sir,' she wrote, 'I shall desiar you to speak on it by cance, & if my mothar shuld ask you whathar I spoke unto you, pray say I naver spoke unto you. . . . S^r^ I pray doe not speak of it befor me.' Well might she add in her next letter: 'I cannat cues but blus when I thinck of the rudnes & trubell I put upon you.'

Mrs. Sherard has enough on her hands; her two would-be sons-in-law are constantly writing to her and waiting upon her, and she has two little Sherard boys to attend to; she can do nothing without Sir Ralph's help, so in the intervals of snubbing his son she consults him about her own. Edmund, who in height and good looks had much the advantage of Mr. Danby, and whose worldly position was quite as eligible, hopes that Moll, like Peg, may be

brought round to a better mind, and his great desire is now to secure the same powerful and peremptory intercession on his own behalf that had done so much for her sister's fortunate, excellent, and unattractive suitor. He thinks it well to offer Mrs. Sherard's conscience the consolation of a ghostly father, in the person of the Rector of Claydon. Kind Mr. Butterfield mounted his cob, and jogged off into Rutlandshire to allay her scruples about the marriage of first cousins once removed. He carried in his pocket a love-letter for Mary, and a handsome offer of settlements to be given to Mrs. Sherard from Sir Ralph, when her religious doubts had been removed.

Edmund writes to Dr. Denton from Claydon: 'This very day our Parson Butterfield went to my Aunt Sherard's at Whitsondine, . . . having had a good interest in my Aunt formerly, he hopes to find the same still; however he sayd that he would put her hard to it, the success you shall hear by the next.' March 15, 1658.

Of 'success' in this embassy there was nothing to record, although Mun acknowledged that the Rector had done him 'Knights service.' 'She desired Mr. Butterfield to present her service to me with hudge kindnesse . . . she is the best natured creature in the world I think & I know the length of her foot to a haire's breadth, she is mighty studious & Romanticq, & those commonly fall in love . . . she is a solidd judicious wench.' To Mary he writes, 'Every joynt in your body, & every perfection of your soule, are inventaried in my heart.' 'My Mistris, her sister and Peg Fust,' he writes again, 'make themselves very merry with my sending Parson Butterfield to Whitsondine, and they wonder that my father did not advise me better than to send such a person a wooing—they sayd that in truth he was improper for that purpose, neither did I send him for that to my Mistris, but to the mother only that he might satisfye her pretended scruple of conscience. I must confesse, though the man be very wise, he has an extraordinary sneaking countenance and way with him, which most of his profession have (me thinkes) who are of the pretended reformed

religion.' Is Edmund contrasting the ministers of the Commonwealth with the courtly priests and Jesuits he had known abroad? or is his sweeping condemnation of the English clergy amply explained by his being crossed in love? In any case he is ungratefully angry with poor Mr. Butterfield. Mrs. Sherard, however, expresses the warmest regard for her young 'cousin Mun'; Mr. Butterfield has convinced her that the marriage is not unlawful—and she adds affectionately to Sir Ralph: 'You cannot imagine the trouble I am in, that I cannot answer your sonne's inclinations as to Deare Mall, for she hath other thoughts than to marry.'

Mr. Butterfield, conscious of gifts, and entirely unconscious that he had left behind him any unfavourable impression, makes another appeal to Mrs. Sherard, which gives us a kindlier picture of Mun than he has left us of the Rector: 'Madam, I humbly thanke you for my courteous useage at your house: in obedience to your will I have cast all the colde water of your's and your daughter's reasons and denyals upon the flames of that passionate young gentleman in whose noble heart the fire had taken such fast hold before, and is growne to such a strength that it converts all things into fuell, and will I feare in time destroy the whole Fabricke, if you can do no more to quench it, then for ought I see others can. Tis Infinit pity such generous love in a person so wise, so sober, provident and hopefull, the onely expectation of a family so well deserving, should be ruin'd by so sad a fate. . . . And truly tis unkindly done of that young and so virtuous Lady to be so good, so amiable, and to appeare so to this wretched world as a destructive Meteor onely to the miserable beholders. If you will not help, yet pity him at least; I know you have sometimes felt your selfe the power, the Tyranny of love, and let him go at least and take the doome of his rash and wrong affection, from those lips that gave his this fatall wound; who can tell but that may be his cure. [We hope Mrs. Aris *veuve* was treated to some of these lovely phrases for home consumption.] In my conscience,' continues the

worthy rector, 'he would be as good, as kinde, as provident, as happy a husband for her as the World affords. I desire not to trouble you with a reply to these my sawcy lines. Onely your pardon for my freenes; I cannot pleade the cause of a friend and Lover with that coolenes and discretion that a many can. You will finde the story no Romance.'

Her religious scruples removed, Mrs. Sherard starts a fresh objection: Moll has been told by a French physician that if she marries she will certainly die, and Edmund appeals to Dr. Denton to disabuse her of what he considers a preposterous notion; and to assure her that 'matrimony is a soveraigne if not the only compleate medicine for all feminine infirmities.' He feels that Mary might safely trust herself with him, 'being that I love her so intirely.'

But Edmund could not leave his interests with any advocate, and he writes to Mary from Claydon with a depth of feeling which all the affectation of the style cannot conceal. 'Madam, you are soe perfect empresse of my heart that in obedience to yours by Mr Butterfield, I have used more violence uppon my selfe these 3 weekes then a Russe, whoe takes it for an honnour to destroy himselfe at his Prince's comand: for my affection is so pure that it carryes with it as absolute resignation of my selfe to you though with my owne destruction, and in conformitye to your order, I beleived that you were then best enjoyed by mee when I wrought your greatest content. Beleive me (Madam) this zeale hath forced me out of my selfe, as farre as any saint ever was, in a rapture; yet after all my art and diligence to put this candle under a bushell, it burnt the more furiouslye, because I tryed so much to extinguish it; for I protest before the majesty of God, I find by strong experience, that I can noe more obteyne of my will to abate of your love, then I can of my memorye that there is noe such person as you are, or my understanding that you are not adorned with all those perfections, the idea whereof doth soe possesse and ravish my soul. I vow by your supremacye and my allegeance that I can ascribe the grouth of my love to this vast height to no other cause but your huge

April 12, 1658.

merit, and my greate care not to sin against it through unadvisednesse or indiscretion; this made me study how to compose my father's displeasure, and answere your Lady mother's scruples, and your desire of single life, before I totally submitted to the sweete conquest your goodnesse hath over mee; to which I am now so compleate a captive that all the neglect you can fasten on your slave, or the diversion friends can prompt me to, are able to beget noe other thought in me then of living and dying your *devotee*, wherefore I beseech you to consider how it can become your Nature, soe full of grace and goodnesse, to call me not Naomi, but Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me, and the waters of Marah are bitter to your supplicant, by giving bitternesse of Spirit to that heart which begs your compassion and comfort; your owne knowledge of the integritye thereof cannot but tell you, this deserves not the corrosive of a deniall, & my fayth and knowledge of your candor & sweetnesse assure me that no word so harsh can fall from your tongue or pen. I beseech you to give me leave to adde one graine of reason to all this weight of affection which is that your resolution is contrary to that end whereto God and nature ordeyned you: not regardful to your dearest relations dead and living, but above all injurious to your sellfe; . . . if you put my affection in one scale and your resolution in the other, & if only judgement held the ballance (which I reasonably hope kindnesse may some what bias) I shall not bee condemned for prising this so greate and well grounded truth that it is impossible for me to live or die other then, Madame, Sweetest Lady, Your most passionately devoted vassal, Edmund Verney.'

He keeps a copy of the letter, with a note that 'The superscription was—For M^rs^ Mary Eure—and no more,' as if language failed to supply any adequate address! Mary had refused to receive his letters, but Mun sent this one to Dr. Denton to forward. 'Not to convey it,' writes his uncle, 'might have argued coldness in me towards your concerne, & to convey is contrary to my sister's instructions, however its gone for this time, but I must begg your excuse for the

April 22, 1658.

like, what I doe I shall doe openly.' Mun had found an unexpected ally. 'You have a sollicitrix here that was yours body and bones, which I presume you did as little dreame of as my selfe—which is my wife. It seemes my sister had chatted it out to her & shee prest it on in her way which is earnest enough, but for ought I could understand gave her small encouragement.'

A week later Edmund hears that Mrs. Sherard is in town without the girls; his interview with her settles nothing, and he writes to her after thinking it over: 'I am amazed that a lady soe vertuous & discreete as you are should leave a gentleman & a lover both unsatisfyed in reason and discontented in his affection.' He has hinted to her that she is treating him very differently from Mr. Danby —she will not say that Mary has any dislike to him, but that she prefers a single life, 'that,' he says pathetically, 'is a point that none can justifye the insisting upon but her selfe: and if she please to improve that modest resolution to a perfect vow, I know none concerned therein but God her selfe and mee; neither becomes it either my judgement or affection to receave the finall result of that from any mouth but her owne. The vastnesse of my affection for the daughter, will doubtlesse obtaine pardon from the mother, for all the indiscretion or rudeness which in this matter may be committed by me, who would make it the whole studdy of my life to please both your selfe and your daughter (the first and only love my youth ever had or shall have), if ever I bee so happy as to be honoured with the title of your most dutifull most obedient sonne and most devoted humble servant, Edmund Verney.'

A letter from Mary to her mother duly forwarded to Sir Ralph, copied by him and docketed 'I showed Mun the originall letter,' ought to have convinced the latter that there was a more serious obstacle to overcome than Aunt Sherard's irresolution. 'Madame, I have received a wandering letter from my Cozen Edmond Verney, how it came to Melton I know not, but there Joseph found it; really I was never more surprised in my life, for I thought my last to

May 8, 1658.

him might have prevented his farther troubling himselfe, for since you have alwaies been pleased to leave me to myselfe I could wish he knew that if hee write or speake a Thousand times it will not prevaile with me at all. I am sorry hee forceth mee to say, if I would marry it should not bee him [alas for the loophole of comfort Mun had found before!], not that I have anything against my cozen, but esteeme him as hee is my neare relation, but never whilst I breathe will I bee wrought to have the least thought of giving him any incouragement in his pretentions, hee would much obleige me to leave persisting in it. Madame, I shall not answere his letter without your command, which I hope I shall not receive because I should unwillingly obey it. All the acknowledgment in the world I render you for your long past promise of never perswading me to marry. Sweet Maddame, that is my resolution; when I change it, your Ladyshipp shall know, but I beleeve I shall nevar trouble you with that message. Bee pleased to Pardon this long impertinency and grant me your blessing, thus I remaine, Deare Madame, your obedient daughter, Mary Eure.'

May 24, 1658. This letter only gave the offender an excuse for writing to his mistress to implore her pardon: 'Madam,' writes Edmund from Covent Garden, 'my last made you my confessor; and this humbly beggs leave to tell you that a Penitent cannot estime himselfe forgiven till he find himselfe restored to grace, therefore I beseech you to use your power, injoyne mee pennance; whereby I may learne and expiate the depth of my guilt and your displeasure. I have ransackt every corner of my heart, and called every thought thereof concerning my mistress and her mother to a strict account and can find nothing but height of affection for the one and of respect and deutye for the other. Yet good natures are sollicitous when a misapprehension befalls them, as much as if they were really guiltye; this makes Mun Verney professe that he is more angry with himselfe that your Ladyship should imagine,' etc., etc., etc. He declares it would be a 'slender bragge' to say that he is incapable of displeasing her; he again prays for an interview, 'for I am

among those objects which are seene and please best at a closer view.'

Another elaborate letter followed to Mrs. Sherard; indeed, if fine-drawn phrases could avail, Edmund does not spare them: he is in constant correspondence with his own friend, Dr. Hyde, about the etiquette of courtship.

Dr. Thomas Hyde's share in Edmund's wooing is not the least curious part of the story. He was a first cousin of Sir Edmund's old friend Lord Clarendon, and brother of Sir Robert Hyde, the Judge, who came to Aylesbury on circuit after the Restoration, and kept up the family friendship with the Verneys. He was a Fellow of New College, and Judge of the Admiralty Court, and lived at Gray's Inn when he was not at Salisbury. They wrote to each other in terms of the most fanciful and extravagant affection; Edmund had an unbounded admiration for his friend's acquirements and his easy flow of words. Edmund sends skeleton letters for Dr. Hyde 'to adorn'; to despatch one of his own beside one of the Doctor's would be, he says, 'like ploughing with an ox and an ass!' Hyde seems to have been a selfish, worldly man; he encouraged Edmund in hard thoughts of his father, and sent him letters in an underhand way under cover to Parson Aris and others. Here is a note from the Doctor enclosing copies of letters for Mun to write to Peg Eure, Peg Fust, and Luce Sheppard: 'Good Sir, your last came this morning to my hands, & in complyance therewith I have made the enclosed. It is an hard task to make bricks without straw, but I have raked together some rubbish. The directions are followed as neare as I might, & I was bound to venter at some proportionation of expressions by conjecture. For instructions of this nature can hardly be delivered but by word of Mouth. Not but what I rejoyce to find your Pen soe Terse, that I thinke it exceedes myne, but the Nature & Variety of the subject beares it not. All is submitted to your discretion for alteration, addition, or totall rejection! only that you use, write and poynt as you sawe it under my hand.'

'Insist much,' writes Mun in ordering another love-letter,

'upon passionate lamentations, complaints & pittifull moanes . . . & how that I will serve her seven & seven yeares as long as Jacob served for his beloved Rachel, in hopes that her mind may alter heareafter (Scripture sayings take much). . . . I must be extreamly passionate . . . & expresse that whatsoever became on it, I should die her passionate lover.'

Captain and Mrs. Sherard paid a visit to Claydon, but they only brought Peg Fust with them; the two Eure girls were prudently left behind at Whitsondine, to Mun's great disappointment. The letters so carefully prepared were to congratulate Peg Eure on her engagement to Mr. Danby. He does not fail to insinuate a hope that her good example may influence her sister. Luce Sheppard, because of her intimacy with the girls, has suddenly become a most interesting person in his eyes, and the following note, written by Dr. Hyde and revised by Mun, was evidently felt to be a triumph of antithesis in epistolary art. 'Mrs Shepheard, my disposition commands me to pay thanks at home for civilities receaved Abroade. These you afforded mee in France in soe high measure, that tract of time cannot extinguish the obligations thereof, but encreases it, and creates in me a longing desire of requitall. I hope this acknowledgement will not seeme to come late, for it ownes the courtesies done to Mun Verney, Boy, so soone as he could write, Man. My arrivall to this state hath put in my head many considerations, more than ever you knew in it; but in time you shall know more, not doubting but you will promote them to the utmost of your industrye and power, and in this confidence rests your faythfull friend and servant.'

June 7, 1658.

June 7, 1658.

'My dearest Mistresse,' Edmund writes to Mary, 'Startle not I beseech you at the title, for it is yours and none but yours, & my pen may be pardoned for writing what is so deeply engraven in my heart; cast I beseech you an eye of pittye upon your slave, whom your perfections have made the most miserable creature in the world, your vertues have such absolute dominion over my soule that it can think of nothing but Mrs Mary Eure. I think that I am writing this at Claydon, but I can scearse beleeve it, for there is more of

me at Whitsondine then in Buckinghamshire: & you will be persuaded it is so, when I assure you that as often as I make any addresses to my God, my saint, even your sweete selfe interposes betweene my maker and mee. . . . Madam bestow no answere at all on me, but of acceptance & kindnesse; indeed I am capable of noe other, for a deniall from you, & a dagger at my heart are the same thing.'

Mary herself has not the smallest taste for flirtation, and she writes back, not to Edmund, but to his father. 'Sir, June 21, 1658. . . . tis my petition you will pleas to use your endeavor to devert my cosen your son from persisting farther. . . . Pray tell him itt is hard to force an afection; he will not find mee so pliable as I beleive he expects and I would unwillingly have him venture upon so fruittles a trouble, for I take noe pleasure in severyty, neither am I so tame as to be compelled from my resolution; this is truth, and I am the more induced you will believe itt because your self dealles so truly witth all the world.' Sir Ralph replies: 'Deare Cozen, I will not July 22, 1658. say you are a hard Mistris, well knowing your owne Hart must needes prevent mee, nor shall I presse you to make my sonne happy, since you soe positively declare against it; tor tis impossible to force affection, and where that's wanting there can never be a true contentment. . . . Noe, noe, sweet cozen, few or none have that absolute mastery over theire owne passions as to love or unlove, either whome, or when they list; nor can that love be real that is at such command. Therefore I presume you will not exact a greater obedience then he, or any man living (that loves you truly) can performe, but rather (since you doe not listen to him) leave it to time, and his owne sad thoughts, to loosen that which your owne merrits have rivetted soe fast within him.'

Well might Mun say that his father had 'writ a very handsome letter' for him, and Mary must have felt her kind old friend to be quite a broken reed, when she found that he sent her enclosed another passionate appeal from her irrepressible admirer. 'Madam, I must begg leave to bemoane July 22, 1658. the prodigious method of my fate, that my mistrisse doome should be conveyed to her servant by the hands of his owne

father, since the greatest malefactor in the world receaves his sentence in person, but the causes thereof assigned have put even my soule upon the racke; your resolution not to marry was fatall enoughe, but the addition (of never him), and the causes why, have commanded mee to recollect all my thoughts and words, to survey all my letters and actions in relation to your deare selfe with a most rigid and censorious eye; and let me never see the face of God or yours, if I can deserve the least atome that lookes towards importunitye or much less force. . . . Dearest Mistriss give mee leave to wish from the botom of my heart, that there never be other force offerd to you then what may proceed from mee: for the full enjoyment of your content is the greatest happiness and dayly prayer of, Madam, your most passionate vassall and devoted slave Edmond Verney.'

Watchful of every chance of communicating with Mary, Edmund (who has heroically refrained from writing to her for full three months) appeals to Colonel Henry Verney, who is staying at Whitsondine, to help him, but Henry
Sept. 1658. replies that he has tried 'all his little witts,' but that he would undertake as soon to empty the sea, as to persuade Mary to marriage. He offers this miserable consolation: 'I shall make it my studdy night and day in my little Progresse to finde out a lady suiteable to thy likeing and merrit.'

Sir Ralph cannot give up hope; he writes of Mary as a jewel, there is no girl in England from whom he should expect so much happiness for his son, himself, and his family. In December Mun is again tormented by a ray of hope; he and his father are going to London, and Aunt Sherard 'has writt him word lately that she intended to be there about the same time with him, and that she would only bring my mistriss along with her and leave the residue of her family behind; methinks I see somewhat auspicious comming upon me,' writes the poor fellow; 'my father lookes upon me also with a gratious eye,' and he resolves that Mary shall not leave town without seeing him.

By this time Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart and many other relations have been drawn into this tragi-comedy of

'Love's Labour's Lost.' 'For your resolution,' Sir Nathaniel writes, 'to goe in person to receive your sentence, pardon me, I can by noe meanes approve of it. Except it bee to make the Captaine drunk and then perhaps he will beate your Aunt, which will bee some satisfaction; but to be serious. When I consider how the sweet innocent Virgin will be exposed, you cannot imagine how it afflicts mee, if you forgive her obedience (as you say you doo) why will you trouble it; can you find in your heart to be a witness of the confusion and disorder which your presence will occasion? . . . Noe, deare cosin, as you love honor, let mee conjure you not to doe a thing soe unhandsom, soe unmanly.' So that scheme fell to the ground, and Mary returned unmolested to Whitsondine.

In January Sir Ralph and Edmund are together in town; the latter, sick with hope deferred, still insists that Mary ought to grant him a personal interview before giving him a final answer. Sir Ralph writes to Mrs. Sherard that on 'Wednesday last' Mun came to consult him about sending his man to Whitsondine with a letter. Sir Ralph thought that 'hee was sufficiently diswaded from it, but on Friday night when I was going to Bed, hee came to me againe & told me his intention was to send away his Man the very next Morning, uppon which (when I saw him soe resolved) though I cast some new Rubbs in his Way, I did noe more oppose it.' The messenger went, but this time he took 'neither Scripp nor Scrole nor Message' from Sir Ralph. Nothing could be colder than Mary's reply to Edmund. 'Sir, I much wondre my wrighting should not as well satisfie you as my speaking (unless you thinke me so foolish that I cannot sett downe my owne sence). My admitting you to Whitsondine would perhaps be taken for some smale incourigment which I am resolved shall never be given you by your servant, Mary Eure.' Mrs. Sherard is 'shewer' that Mall will not change her mind, and hopes that Mun will no longer 'prosicewt' his suit. Jan. 17, 1659.

This might be taken as conclusive. Another match is proposed to him, with a daughter of Lady Springet, who lives 'within 5 miles of Chaford in the Chiltons of

Buckinghamshire.' Edmund, weary of suspense, and held, as he says, in the 'Padlock of Necessity,' makes some languid inquiries about the young lady, whether she be 'of a gentle and grave behaviour'; but he still thinks that he ought not to take any final step without having seen
Feb. 1659. Mary face to face. He tries to persuade his father to lend him horses to go into Rutlandshire; this he utterly refuses, though Mr. Butterfield is won over by Mun's arguments, and they both give Sir Ralph 'reason enough whereby I was bound to go, but that never mooves him when he has no mind to it.' Mun finds that if he goes at all, 'it must be as a rebellious sonne & a runaway,' which would not recommend him at the journey's end, and besides 'horses good & able enough to carry him with credit are hard to bee found among hackenees.' In March, strange to say, the mother does not wish the matter to be considered as at an end: 'I shall contrive some waie this somer for your son to see my M. E.'

Henry recommends Lady Longueville's daughter, and Sir Ralph has heard in July about a rich Mrs. Utbut in the City; but Mrs. Utbut's demands are too big, and she does not wish her daughter of fourteen to marry for three years. Mun feels no regret that it comes to nothing; 'a vertuous gentlewoman is by farre to bee esteemed and preferred than the richest cittizen in England.'

Mrs. Sherard and Danby *père* have quarrelled over settlements, even the young man's 'carrig' has not been all she could desire, and Edmund reports that she has been to
July 29, 1659. London 'to put a period to Mr. Danby's businesse,' but the perverse Peg feels more warmly towards him as her mother cools. Mrs. Sherard then asks Sir Ralph and Edmund to go with her into Yorkshire, and when they decline, as they have guests at Claydon, she proposes to send her daughters there, to give Edmund full opportunity 'to try what he can work upon Mall's spirit,' though, her mother adds, she still thinks she would not change her condition to be a
Aug. 9, 1659. 'Queene'! Sir Ralph is full of hospitable plans; he trusts that Peg Fust will come too, and he will send his coach to meet 'the three virgins' at any place appointed: 'My Sister

Gardner brings Preshaw heather, and Sister Elmes, Sister Pen Denton, and Brother Harry meet her here—doubt not want of lodging, for the virgins are resolved to ligge altogeather.' Edmund is amazed that Mrs. Sherard 'having long since extinguished and buried the least sparke of desire that way, should of herselfe in a manner rekindle and rake it up againe.' 'I am sory that my first meeting with my mistrisse must be at my owne house where I cannot without breaking the rules of good manners give her back her rude letter with reproache.' He is embittered, but only for a moment, for his heart is full of joy when he thinks she is really coming, 'and I heare a bird sing I shall have her at length.'

But the visit is never paid; Mall manages to fall sick, and is frequently blooded. Mrs. Sherard writes in October that 'the seson of the year is past for jurneys of plesheur,' though she had three times prepared her daughters for a start, and in November she announces Peg's marriage to Sir Ralph in these terms: 'One of them is disposed of now, I bles God for it—as you have ever bin hur very great frind soe pray will you continew it and advis her to complye with her husband and not to shufill him off, after shee hath had him a time, as she hath don some others besides my selfe.' In December she is a little pacified; she thinks that Peg is doing very well with Mr. Danby, and that he is 'a juditious & a discreet man, and but that he hath a tircke [Turk] to his father, he might have a large income now'; her news is a little mixed, for 'the anibaptis are flocking northwards,' and the hard frost prevents her sending him 'som goosebirye trees.'

Mun writes to Mrs. Sherard once more to ask her intentions: 'without ostentation be it spoken, Thom: Danby will not thinke himself disparaged if Mun Verney professe himselfe as capable of the yonger sister as he is of the elder.' Her reply is to invite Edmund and his father to keep Christmas with them at Whitsondine, 'tho' I do not interpret this invitation as any good omen,' writes poor Mun.

In February 1660 he tells his father 'that there remaines in me a hankering after my old Mistriss, but truly I

perceive not the least simptome whereby reason dares without vaine & foolish presumption elevate my hopes. I assure myselfe that there is noe other proposall enterteyned, but if there bee I must beare it patiently considering that I can in no way hinder it.' In April 1660 Captain Sherard has been chosen Knight of the Shire for Rutland, and his wife and Mary are going to town, where Edmund expects to meet them. In August he asks Dr. Hyde to pen another letter for him, for 'tis not possible for any one to be more acute & sublime,' making one more passionate and persuasive appeal to his mistress, pointing out his long and faithful courtship, his humble behaviour, and absolute submission to her will in not importuning her, though his eternal happiness depends on her answer, 'all this set forth in your noble strayne may perhaps work some effect if anything cann.' But another year goes by and at the end of 1660 Dr. Hyde can only condole with his friend that Mrs. Sherard is still making 'such varietyes of exceptions and scruples when this Resolution owned would have been taken for a peremptory answer,' and that after '3 yeares tricks & attendance' the Lady has not been 'with soe much adoe obteyned.'

In an old family pocket book, recently found amongst some lumber in the smoking-room at Claydon, the first entry is as follows, in John Verney's hand: '*Marriage* 1663, July 15. Mary Eure and William Palmes of Lindley Yorkshire in St. Martin's by Dr. Robert Townsend.' The sisters quarrelled so bitterly respecting the occupation of the old Jacobean mansion at Malton of which they were co-heiresses that in 1665 it was actually pulled down under a writ of partition and divided stone by stone between them. In 1712 Mary's son William Palmes sold the manor with the lodge and the entrance gateway to Sir T. Wentworth, from whom it descended to Earl Fitzwilliam. There is a begging letter from Palmes in later years, with a copy across the back of it of a prompt and curt refusal from the 'Cousin Verney' at that time owner of Claydon: his sentimental references to his mother and the affection of old times awake no response in the home of which Mary had so persistently refused to become the mistress.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JOHN VERNEY, THE INDUSTRIOUS APPRENTICE.

1653–1662.

THE career of Sir Ralph's second son, John Verney as portrayed in the old letters, gives us as complete a picture of the progress of the industrious apprentice of the seventeenth century as Hogarth's famous series does of the eighteenth century, and with results even more splendid than the wedding with the merchant's daughter and the Lord Mayor's coach of Hogarth's highly moral climax. Our apprentice becomes a baronet, a landed proprietor, and a member of Parliament; and at last in the final scene his linen cap has been transformed into a viscount's coronet (with an earldom in prospect for his heirs), and we leave him with all that 'should accompany old age—as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.'

Virtue herself stands aghast at the material rewards she has heaped up, and we feel more affection for the elder brother, with his blighted hopes and wasted opportunities, than the younger inspires with all his success and prosperity. But the boy must have had no common strength of purpose who, in the evil days of the Stuart Restoration, could set his face so resolutely to a life of humdrum industry. Other youths of good family, his cousins and contemporaries, were idling away their lives, pretending to work at the bar or struggling for a place at Court, while some, like 'Cousin Hals' and 'Cousin Turville,' even 'took to the road' and ended with the gallows. Nat Hobart, John Stewkeley, and many of Sir Ralph's best friends had sons who, not attaining to such a melodramatic end, yet brought nothing but debt

and disappointment to their fathers' doors. If there was an absence of romance in the life of a man whose best years were devoted to the making of money, other fathers may well have envied Sir Ralph a son who at fifteen chose his own profession; who enjoyed his work as other men did not enjoy their pleasures; and whose aspirations were so reasonable, and plans so well laid, that Fortune could not feel herself justified in frustrating them.

A pleasant, happy child, little Jack was welcome everywhere. In his baby days he had trotted after his mother, singing and chattering, and cheering her solitary progress through the empty rooms at Claydon. At ten years old Aunt Sherard writes of him: 'I have chosen Jack to be my galant, and I thinke I have as fine A one, as any in the towne.' Their precise and methodical father always leant upon John while he was inclined to depreciate Edmund. But his partiality bred no ill-will between the brothers, who were throughout life the best of friends.

March 30, 1654.

At an age when little boys are apt to be equally trying to their garments and guardians, Luce Sheppard wrote, 'Mr. John hath keept his clothes in so good order, I have not had to buy anything for him: next weecke I will send him againe to scholle, allthough wee are great gainers by his sober company; yet wee must consider him that hee losse not by ours.'

Before his return from Blois, Sir Ralph had been pondering over this question of Jack's schooling. He was not in love with the new doctrines, and what we should now call a Church School was liable at any moment to have its light extinguished. By a stringent ordinance passed in 1654, ministers and schoolmasters 'who are or shall be Ignorant, Scandalous, Insufficient, or Negligent,' were to be ejected or restrained from teaching. It was hard indeed to find a schoolmaster with Royalist and Episcopal leanings who could not be brought under one or other of these categories. Under conditions so precarious, the Rev. Dr. James Fleetwood kept a school at Barn Elms in Surrey. His cousin, Charles Fleetwood, and his brother

George were amongst Cromwell's strongest supporters, but he held firmly to the old opinions. It does not appear why Sir Ralph preferred a private to a public school; his brothers had been at Winchester, the Stewkeleys had a boy there, and the Doctor thought it 'a very fitt place for Jack'; perhaps he was afraid of the well-known Puritan principles of Warden Harris.[1]

Aunt Sherard writes from Whitsondine that if Sir Ralph does not mind 'a scoole soe far off of London, here is a very good one within 7 miles of me, at A plas called Uppingham;[2] the master hath the report of A very gentille man, and if you send him this waies, I will have a care of him, for I can nevr dow enoufe for you, for the care you have had of mine;' . . . 'the scoolmaster,' she writes again, 'is comended for a sivill and A well bred man, which I know will be very yousful to your young mounseer.' But Sir Ralph did object to the distance from town, and Jack was sent to Barn Elms. Sept. 1653.

The first leaving home for school is a sad ordeal, and it must have been hard indeed to Jack. His ignorance of schoolboy traditions, his little 'french aire' and foreign accent, so much admired by Luce Sheppard and his cousins, and the very cut of his clothes, no doubt exposed him to unsparing ridicule in the rough young world of those days; 'our schools doe Cow and over awe him,' the Doctor writes, and six months later Mrs. Isham says, 'All y^e^ falte I could find in him, he was y^e^ sobrist youth that ever I did

[1] There was an old connection with the school in both families; an Edmund Verney was a Winton scholar in 1508, and a Richard Stewkeley, of Hawkley, Hants, in 1505. John Potenger was headmaster in 1653, and was succeeded by William Burt from 1654 to 1657; but the headmasters were little more than ushers during the Commonwealth, the wardens were the great men. I am indebted to G. M. A. Hewett, Esq., of Winchester College, for this information.

[2] Francis Meres of Trinity, Cambridge, was Headmaster of Uppingham, 1641 to 1669, as Mr. R. N. Douglas, of Giggleswick School, Yorks., informs me. Whissendine is quite ten miles off, another instance of the 'computed distances' in the old letters being shorter than the measured miles.

see, but my hope is that he had more metill in my absence than I could parswad him to in my presence.' 'Dr. Fleetwood, his wife, and Queen Kate scold grievously, that Monsr. Jehan is kept noe better in cloaths.' To be correct in all matters of school etiquette was doubtless as important in the seventeenth century as it is in the twentieth, and a special sort of taper was just then in fashion at Dr. Fleetwood's. 'Je vous prie,' Jack writes, 'de manvoier de la chandelle de cirre entortillé, car tous les garçons en ont pour brullay et moy ie n'en ay point pour moy.' Jack's diligence is commended by his master; he is 'very ingenious and quick in understanding Arithmetick, wherein he hath made a very good progresse.' But Dr. Fleetwood's authority was tottering, and before Jack had completed a second year, his master was prohibited from teaching as 'a delinquent.'

March 1655.

May 21, 1656.

'It is a generall consern,' wrote Doll Lecke, 'the puting to silenc thos good men; I pray God rase them frinds, and give us memory and constancy to live as we have binn taught.' Her wishes were fulfilled; the doctor was forthwith engaged by an old acquaintance of the Verneys, formerly Lady Mary Villiers, daughter of the great Duke of Buckingham, now widow of a devoted Royalist, James Stuart, first Duke of Richmond. She was left with her own boy and girl to educate, and her husband's orphan nephew, Charles Stuart, Lord Aubigny, whose father had fallen with Sir Edmund Verney at Edgehill. Lord Aubigny was the same age as Jack Verney; Esme Stuart, the Duke, was younger; after his premature death, his cousin succeeded him as third Duke of Richmond. Dr. Fleetwood was well provided for as tutor to these boys, till the Restoration made his opinions orthodox once more, and advanced him to the Bishopric of Worcester.

Dec. 1655.

Anne Hobart, always prompt to befriend Ralph's belongings, writes: 'I hear "swet Jack" must be sent far away by the Dockter; if you send him to me . . . he shall be carfully locked to as if he war my dearest child . . . If you will, he shall goo every day an hour to Mr. Castilon at my nes Healls and he shall hear him red laten—for french my

hus will prat with him . . . and he may larn to danc, so he will not quit los his tim.' Dr. Denton is full of schemes for 'placing Jack,' and his other nephew, Jack Fust. 'I have spoken with Ld. Mulgrave's chaplain (who teaches his son) to take the care of one or two, who saies for my (but sure he meanes his owne) sake, if it may be soe contrived to all contents, he will. The man I beleeve is very sufficient in parts, and for ought I know reasonable moderate in his opinions. The most difficult will be to place one or other neare to him; the best place is Kersey's, but whether neare enough I doubt.' 'There is an inconveniency called play if togeather,' the Doctor adds, but he is sanguine enough 'to hope that happily that may be prevented by Kersey and others. . . . One other considerable inconvenience there is, which is that I doubt he will not be able to attend them, nor they him, above two or three houres a day, espetially this winter time. There is yet another which is that haply the chaplain may return (which depends on my Lord's augmentation of his salary) to Cambridge in the springe.' . . . 'Triplett who is to reside and teach at the Dutch embassador's, has also offered to take Jack: he will not care for above 8 or 10 at most.'

Dec. 13, 1655.

Jan. 7, 1656.

Mr. Kersey (who was already known to Sir Ralph) wished it to be understood that he did not profess to give a commercial education, and that if the boy were 'to be fitted for a merchant or other trade, the best and readiest way is to place him at Board with such as make that businesse only their profession, which, in regard my imployment is for the most part abroad, I doe not undertake. But if his designe is only to learne some thing in the Mathematiques, I shall doe him what service I am able.' As Edward Fust decided to send his Jack to Mr. Kersey's, Sir Ralph was willing to do the same: they were to pay twelve shillings a week each. Dr. Denton describes how 'Mons. Jehan's hart is here, and his body at this time: the 2 Johns doe not love to be asunder.' 'Jack hath noe mind to be at Lady Hobart's; Fust and he have not parted all this Christmas, sometimes here night and day, and sometimes there.' At Mr. Kersey's

it appears that the boys must 'ly in a garrett, he havinge noe other lodging but the dininge roome and the chamber against it w^ch^ he cannot sever, and they'l be about 8s. a weeke more.' Sir Ralph 'had rather pay more then let Jack be in a cold garrett, considering the extremity of the season . . . Uncle ffust will be of the same minde for his son too.' The father and uncle do their best in exhorting the pair to content themselves with a moderate amount of

Jan. 1656. mischief, but Sir Ralph doubts 'the 2 young ones will bee to crafty for us old ones, and doe little there but play togeather, therfore I shall desire to send Jack to schole againe, with all y^e^ speed that may bee . . . I pray read Jack's letter and charme him to obey it.'

Two schools are now recommended, at Hammersmith and at Kensington; 'either of those places are very convenient, if the Masters are good and carefull.' The master at Hammersmith has 'leave to teach,' but Mr. Turberville of Kensington is finally chosen. Sir Robert Fenn, who lives next door, says he 'is Master of French, Italian, Greeke, and Latine, and of Musicke, and he thinks him a very good schoolmaster.' Dr. Denton adds, 'You will easily ghesse how fitt Kensington is for Jack; if all will be taught as is pretended unto.' Dr. Denton is 'not very fond of his master's phitiognomy, yet I find Dr. Hodges the vicar of Kensington hath 2 sons there, and Baron Steele one son there. The Dr. lives in the towne, and the Baron hath a brother livinge in the towne, wch makes me hope he is better then he lookes for. Aunt Abercromby's boy was also at this school.' Aunt Doctor replenished Jack's wardrobe, and 'made choise of a very good chamber and . . . . tooke order to have it and his beddinge aired.' 'He hath yett noe chamber fellow, but there is expectacion of one of his old comrades and he makes choyse of him if he come.' Jack

Dec. 30, 1656. remained there three years. 'I am very sorry,' Mr. Turberville writes, 'it was not my happiness to have knowne him sooner. I would be loth by extenuating of others abilities to magnifie mine owne. But certainly much more might in the tyme he spent at Barne Elmes and Fulham have bin

infused into his capacity, yet I doubt not but to give you a very sufficient assurance of his proficiency in a small tyme, both of his amendement in his writing, y^e^ mastery of his grammar and an indiferent Latine Author, his preservation of the ffrench and y^e^ command of his Violl, which I had rather you should imbibe with your owne eares then depend uppon my naked assurance. I hope your eldest sonne, with whome he now keepes his Christmas, can and will by his observacion afford you a large testimony. To atteine to all this, and to crowne his actions, one thing more I must insert that (in reality I speake it) he is very laborious and industrious to redeeme y^e^ tyme that is past and irrecoverable, and very observant of my advice, which are all as I conceive great symptomes of answering your expectac̃ons.'

Jack's diligence in his studies, however, did not always come up to Sir Ralph's strict standard. 'Truly Sr,' Jack writes, 'I doe mitily wonder how you should find me soe negligent towards my learning. I verily beleeve it was last Saturday when I came to London ; but if you can afford a little time to riede on further you shall see . . . . For that day I was at Winser and bake againe, a horse Backe with my Master's consent, and not onely me, but also 4 other young Gentlemen and our Usher, for my Master would not trust us alone, and I had done some of my Busenesse on friday night, Because I would not goe and lose all Saturday morning ; now Saturday in the after noone wee doe alwaise playe, and therefore I doe straingely wonder how that negligence should bee soe found for to lye in my Bosome. Indeed I should bee very glad for to see you heere and also my most Dear Brother for to accompaine you along This pleasant Roa.le.'

Music was a part of every gentleman's education, the Elizabethan opinion still happily prevailing, that it is the 'natural sweeter of our sour life, in any man's judgement that is not too sour,' and Jack had a real love and aptitude for it. His mother's sweet singing and guitar-playing must have been associated with all his childish recollections of her, and he wrote to his father from school asking him 'to bestow the

gittarre which was my Mother's on mee: you did give it mee when you went out of France, and then when I came over, you sayed I should not have it because it would bee broken att schoole; that was a good reason, for wee lay 18 in a Chamber, but att this Schoole wee have but two to a Chamber, and wee keepe our Chamber doores loket and therfore noe body comes in but them which wee have a minde to lett in, nay and besides if they should come into the Chamber I have a Closet where I could putt it, but I am shoore there would bee noe nides; if there laketh a key unto it, I will have owne made. Heere is owne thing more is to bee putt in, that is if my brother would have it then I doe not petition it of you, but hee hath a very good owne of his owne' [there were at least five guitars at Claydon], 'and I am shure hee would not bee my hindrance of it. That Gittarre which is in the wooden casse is of noe sound att all almost, and then it is very ugly; it is very corse and rude, and I am sure that you will not use the other which I demand if you please. . . . The Wioll hath putt mee in love with all sorts off musikes. My Master doth see mee proceede soe much of the Wioll that hee hath promised mee to teach mee for to pleay of the Lute when the Deyes groe longer; hee hath also lent mee owne of his Wiolls this Christmasse for to practise on.' Sir Ralph notes on the outside of this appeal, 'I told him he should have it, or as good a one, but bid him let it rest till I come upp.'

Oct. 29, 1657. 'I sent Jack to Doll,' writes Dr. Denton, 'that she might be an ey witness how fast he growes and might bring y^{u} the tale and tidings of it'; Aunt Sherard says 'he groos tawle'; and Pen declares that 'he looks so faire that if he ware in woman's apparill he must look lovely in it.' His care of his dress is in marked contrast to Mun's slovenliness: 'Mr. Denton the Taylour hath brought mee a sute of closes of the same Cloth that my Cloke is off: hee hath also brought mee a sote with a pair off uppur stokings, and a pair of under reade stockings.' . . . 'I doe lake some blacke rubin for to make mee some cuffestrings and shoostrings. I have bought already one paire of each, but they are now almost worne

Aug. 13, 1657.

Nov. 1656.

out, and therefore I shall take one paire of shoostring against chrismas whether I goe to London or noe . . . it costeth me but a grote a yard. I doe allso take a hatt against christmas, for my oulde hatt which I have now is full of holes in the croune of it.'

'We shall make bold with out y^r^ leave to have him here this Xstmas,' the Doctor wrote, but Jack's conscience was not quite at ease. 'I hope you will not be angre att my being att London; there is none of the schollars left att Kensington but my Masters sonne, which is but a very little Lade of noe company att all, and my Brother was very willing I should bee with him.' Jack goes 'to eat a fritter on Shrove Tuesday' at the Doctor's; these family visits paid and received, and an occasional ride, seem to have made up the sum of his amusements. Later he had an attack of ague, and his master's son died of the small-pox. 'It was out of our house that hee Died; hee was buried on the 11th day of this moneth,' Jack writes, 'but there is noe danger of any further proceeding.' Jan. 3, 1657. Nov. 19, 1657.

Jack himself was not satisfied with his schooling; he was fifteen when he wrote of his wish to be bound 'apprintice unto some very good traydesman; and I doe know Lords sones which must be apprintices, and theire elder brother is worth 5 thousand pounds a yeare; as for example my Lord Cossellton' [Castleton]. June 1657.

Sir Ralph destined Jack for the bar, and was not desirous that he should have a purely commercial training; he had much else to occupy his mind, and at eighteen Jack is still complaining that he is taught little that is of any practical use. His father had him home for the summer, and the boys had a happy time together and paid a visit with their father to Sir Roger at Wroxall. After Mun's return to London, Jack writes a piteous lament from Claydon; 'out of this greivous Dull and Sadd, Lamentable Mournefull place I doe send you foolish nonsensicall lines, which truly I am ashaimed to send from so Hideous a plaice (for lacke of your Compaynye) to soe Jolly a place as London. Melampo and Sylvio present there sarvises unto you and that most May 1659.

Respectively. Wee have not a Ducke more now then when you was here, yett there is an honest Moorehen doth sitt upon foure eggs in a Bush att y^e^ side of y^e^ Killhouse Pond, w^ch^ I hope will come to a good Providence for that y^e^ Pond is Payled in on y^e^ Highway side. Two of your Claydon Lasses are gonne, for Walter King's daughter is marryed, there is owne, an John Roads his wife is dead (last night), there is y^e^ other. I know not what you would have more, for you have all the Newse att Lovely London, and likewise in the countrye; if you would know any about the Bassa [Pasha] of Aleppo you shall, but it must bee about 7 or 8 yeares hence.' Jack in the meanwhile read with Mr. Butter-
May 1659. field, who wrote of him: 'Mr. John is very civil and studious in his way, and if he prove no great clerke, I am perswaded he will prove a very honest civill gentleman and you may have much comfort in him.' But this was not at all Jack's idea of getting on. He attacks his father again and again about perfecting his education, because 'one must have some living now adayes.' Sir Ralph so far consented to Jack's schemes as to send him to a Mr. Rich, who teaches merchants' accounts, reserving his final decision till he had taken more advice.

It was not difficult to be taught classics, but arithmetic was a branch of wisdom to be dug for more than for hid treasures; Jack would willingly give all that he had to acquire it, 'although it would bee but (as it were) a cromme or bitte in a loafe.' Sir Ralph asks Mr. Wakefield of Edmonton to give him an opinion 'With regard to an
Sept. 1659. apprenticeship.' He replies, 'I doe nott know as these uncertayne tymes are, whom to advise you too, though I have very dilligently enquired of divers. The Spanish Trade att present you know is loste, w^ch^ was almost a 4th p^rt^ of our employment. To the east country and Hamburg trade you know I was brought up myselfe, w^ch^ is accompted the surest trade; Butt neither my Broth^r^ nor my selfe, could find any great good to bee done by itt; only some Auntient Rich-men, who followes itt as close as the Pack-Horses goes weekely; for the Barbadoes, New England, and all the

Ilands, though many getts money by that trade, yet I should never advise any ffreind of myne to breed up his sonne too itt. And for the Turkey East and West India Trade, without itt bee some perticular men that have the knacke of itt, nott one in 3 of them thrives, soe that those w^ch^ doe itt makes them soe high that they aske and have 500*l.*, and sometymes more with an apprentice, w^ch^ makes mee conceave myselfe lesse able, and itt to bee of more hassard and difficulty then ever anything you putt mee upon before. Itt being high tyme, if you intend yo^r^ sonne for a merchant speedily to looke out for a Place for him; Hee being now very well growne, and 18 yeares of Age. For w^ch^ reason I have knowen some men to refuse the taking of an Apprentice.'

By the end of 1659, Jack was rewarded by obtaining the long-desired position of merchant's apprentice. Mr. Wakefield, the pessimist, had failed to find an opening, but Sir Roger Burgoyne, who had a brother in the City, agreed, after careful inquiry, with Mr. Gabriel Roberts, a London merchant 'trading to the Levant seas,' to receive Jack, with a premium of 400*l.*, 'the same sum my brother had from Sir James Harrington.' Sir Ralph further bound himself to Mr. Roberts for 1,000*l.* A copy of the bond still exists, and the printed indenture, signed by Sir Roger, John Buckworth, and Gabriel Roberts. The terms of it are very quaint, stringent, and minute. The agreement is for seven years. Jack is received at once for a fortnight on trial. 'For his clothes,' Sir Roger writes, 'Mr. Roberts is to finde him after those are worn out that he carries along with him, whether on this side the sea or the other.' Sir Ralph then came up to London, the seal was set to the bond, and Jack was really an apprentice at last. The choice of his master proved a very fortunate one. Gabriel Roberts came of a Welsh family, natives of Beaumaris, then so thriving a town that a proverb ran that men went to Carnarvon for lawyers, to Conway for gentlemen, and to Beaumaris for merchants.

His father, Lewis Roberts, a distinguished member of the Levant Company, had published in 1638, 'The Merchantes

Mappe of Commerce'—to give the result of 'my own 12 years collections during my abode and employment in many parts of the world.' Finding this knowledge too vast to be contained within the boards of a folio, 'I was constrained,' says the zealous Welshman, 'with the wind-scanted Sea man, to cast about again and limit myself to a narrow scantling.' The author's friend Izaak Walton, his cousin 'Robert Roberts, of Llanvair in Anglesey,' and others, prefaced the book with some complimentary verses; and in this company of bards his little nine-year-old son Gabriel piped in his childish treble. The poetical boy had now settled down to the hard prose of business life, but had kept his warm Welsh heart and generous sympathies.

In allowing Jack to be bound to a citizen of London, Sir Ralph rose superior to many prejudices of his age and his class. The tendency of the Civil War had been to bring the profession of arms once more to the front, as the only one befitting a gentleman. On the other hand such few apprentices as were 'Persons of good Quality' gave offence to the City by affecting 'to go in costly apparel, and wear weapons, and to frequent schools of dancing, fencing, and music.' Proclamations of the Lord Mayor and Orders of Common Council were constantly directed against such irregularities. An apprentice was expressly forbidden to wear lace, embroidery in crewell or metal, any 'cost of needlework, or any silke in or about any part of his apparel'; there was special legislation even for his nightcap. Jack was therefore bound to wear nothing except what his master provided; but if Mr. Gabriel Roberts shared his countrymen's love of music as well as of poetry, we may hope that he relaxed in favour of Jack's cherished guitar the rule which forbade an apprentice to own a musical instrument.

While the New Year 1660 dawned darkly upon England, to Jack the future seemed very bright, for he had planted his foot on the first step of the ladder that was to lead to success and honour. He hoped that his profession would prove no less satisfactory to his father than if he had been 'an Inns of Court Gentleman.' A few weeks later he is

in the full tide of bustle and importance; his presence in the warehouse is so necessary that he can scarcely speak to Aunt Pen though she went up 'unporpos' to see him. 'As concerning the liking of my Trade I assure you that I never delighted in any play when I was at Schoole as I doe in this trade, and alsoe in hearing of Business both inland and outland. I assure you alsoe that if I could doe my Mr. tenn times more servise then now I doe, I should doe it with a real gladdnesse. I hope that I shall soe contrive my businesse that there may bee noe lett in the way to hinder my going Beyond Sea betweene Michelmasse and Christmasse; although it will be a sad voyage with me for parting from soe Deare a ffather and Brother. . . . My Aunt Penelope Denton was here on the 12th inst. And shee would have stayed till I had writt a Letter to have sent by my Uncle Verney, butt I had noe leasure att all to writte, by reason of our selling of a greate parcell of silke w^ch^ was that day to bee delivered, and at the day of delivery we have a little trouble in weighing of itt, stripping of itt, and severall other things, as writting bonds, Bill of Parcells, &c., wherefore I could not then writt butt was faine to Acquainte her with my buisnesse, to cause her to be soone gone, for that my Mr. was all the while in the Warehouse with him w^ch^ bought y^e^ Silke.' March 14, 1660. 'Mr. Roberts doth not att all decline from his former kindnesse, but hath taught mee to keepe Marchants Bookes, which indeed is not ordonary. The Gentlewomen likewise continue in their former kindness unto me, And I still continue att Table with them, soe If you will be pleased (if you thinke fitt) this lent to send mee any sort of your pyes to Give unto them, I shall, whether or no, continue your most humble and most obedient son and sarvant.' March 6 1660. Claydon pies are duly sent; the last 'was a very good one,' John writes, 'but none can tell what it is, some are of opinion of one thing some of another, but most that it is Wild Bore.' The fair, well-mannered youth was no doubt a pleasant addition to the 'Gentlewomen's' society; and they showed their kindness in a practical way a few weeks later by promptly sending for a 'chirurgion' when he had

a 'small mischance about 10 of the Clock att night; a sckillett of hott Lye slipt in the fire, and scalded the hind part of my right legg.' Jack had frequent visitors, and if Mrs. Gabriel Roberts and her daughters craned their necks out of window to see the young apprentice's fashionable relations, they probably derived some feminine satisfaction in contrasting the shabbiness of Aunt Penelope's attire with their own rich silk gowns and riding-hoods; for the worthy merchant was prospering greatly.

With his arduous duties in the shop, and in the acquiring of his master's 'art,' Jack had but little time for letter-writing or holiday-making during the first eighteen months of his apprenticeship, but he was well content. When he did write it was with such conceits and flourishes as no other pen in the family aspired to.

His mind continually ran on the golden prospect of going 'beyond sea'; and Alderman William Love, who advises Sir Ralph in the matter, writes: 'Since Mr. Roberts's returne to towne, I have discoursed wth him about your sonne, and find him (as formerly) a little troubled that his Brother hath left his affaires in Aleppo with Mr. Sheppard, yet still resolved to send your sonne thither by the first ship (haveing quite laid by the thought of Smyrna) and if Mr. Shepperd will not assist him gratis, then to make the best agreement he can for the first yeare; after which he hopes your sonne will be a noune Substantive. Towards his charges of setting out I find his M^{r} enclined to give him ten or twelve pounds (as he saith his Master did him) w^{ch} will not be sufficient, but if he performe in other respects he may be borne with in that. There rests onely to tell you the time of his going, and that is now somewhat uncertaine by reason of Gen. Montagu's late attempt uppon Argies [Algiers]; be the issue whereof good or bad (for we have yet no certain newes) I feare the great Turke will so resent it as to seize our estates in his dominions, if not affront the Ambass^{r}; perhaps both.'

Sept. 10, 1661.

In the autumn of 1661 Jack went home, and Sir Ralph writes on his return to Mr. Roberts, 'I humbly thanke you

Oct. 6, 1661.

for my sonn's being heere thus long; truly hee had been with you at your time appointed but that some of my friendes pressed mee much to let him stay to goe upp with them, which I hope hath not been to your prejudice. I confesse it was against my will and his too in respect his time was out, but you know woemen are importunate, and will not easily bee denied; therefore I presume you will the more willingly excuse both him and mee.' John follows the events of the mercantile world with keen interest, and in a letter to his father gives a list of merchants who had failed: 'Among ye rest the 2 Wrights of Genoa, having from thence advice of it, (Mr. Bourne's Couzin,) Mr. John Sweeft and Mr. Delbo of London both broke in one day last weeke; alsoe y^e^ two Mr. Clearks last weeke and severall others. And for y^e^ honour of red Garter, Sir William Gardener (as it is all over London spoken) just reddy to breake, his bills of Exch: being all protested at Liccorne. (God be thanked) my master had not to doe with any of them.' Jan. 22, 1662.

Sir Ralph already made use of his 'prentice son in a business capacity, and Jack provides with extreme care and minuteness for the transmission to Claydon of two cases of young vines. With the near prospect of leaving England for many years, Jack, that he might know something of his prospects, wrote to Sir Ralph to ask 'what estate you intend me first and last.' Despite the respectful tone of his letter, and that his son is of age, Sir Ralph is annoyed at any such inquiries. 'You must know that children doe not use to chatechize theire Fathers what Estate they intend to leave them, nor indeed can I tell you if I would, for tis like to bee more or lesse as you carrie yourselfe towards me and towards your Master . . . if you keepe lewd company, and by drinkinge, gaminge, or your owne idlenesse loose your reputation, bee confident you will thereby also loose my affection, and your Portion too. Therefore as you tender my satisfaction and your owne advantage, carry yourselfe soberly, Honestly, and painfully, and then I shall thinke nothing too much for you. Now you know my intention and resolution, God in Mercy direct you for the best.' Jan. 16, 1662

Sir Ralph might write severely of a breach of filial etiquette, as he understood it, but his affection for the son about to be parted from him for twelve years was very tender and deep. He engaged Soest, the rival of Lely, to paint his portrait, and being dissatisfied with the first result induced him to 'mend' it before Jack left England. In March 1662 'the King hath granted a Convoy to the Levant ship upon those conditions, to depart with a Smirna shipp and all other shipps that can be ready, then to set saile.' 'Most Hon: Father,' Jack writes, 'this is to let you know that the Capt. of the shipp holds his resolution to be in the Downes by the 15th instant; so that now if you please to give order to your Cooke for a Pye, if it comes by the next weekes carrier it will not be to soone; alsoe if you please send me 2 or 3 winter cheeses wch I hope to carry to Aleppo, they being there in great esteeme. The next week I shall send my things aboard. I suppose by ye 10th present ye shipp may depart from Gravesend towards ye Downes whether I intend to ride post to meet her. I have 3 Bottles belonging to a cellar of myne wch I thinke to send to Mr. Gapes, there to be fil'd with strong waters. I suppose they all hold somewhat above 3 pintes. Mr. G. Roberts a day or two since gave me 2 sheetes of paper of advise and some other particulars, which at your comming to towne, if it please you, you may see. . . . He intitles it on the backe side, viz. Commission given to John Verney now bound for Aleppo in Siria, upon the Dover Marchant, whom God preserve, Gabriel Roberts.'

April 2, 1662.

Sir Ralph enters into every detail of his son's outfit with his usual careful kindness; Jack agrees to his suggestion 'that the meat baked in Potts will be (as much or) more satisfactory to me than were it in Paste, considering all the reasons noted downe in yours, but espetially carredge, wch will be farr easier to doe in Pots then in Crust, and I had demanded this way at first but that I don't remember I ever saw any in that maner at Claydon.'

April 8, 1662.

Mr. Roberts supplied 20*l.* towards his outfit, which cost

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West pinx.

JOHN VERNEY

about 50*l.*, including 10*l.* for his outlay on the journey.[1] John had his arms 'sett on his spoon,' he took his 'Viol and a bible servis and a leather case,' costing 8*s.* 6*d.*, and Sir Ralph spent as much again in the purchase of Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying,' 'Bishop Andrewes' Devotions,' Gerard's 'Meditations,' and the 'Imitation of Christ.' The world of books is strangely small. Three of Sir Ralph's four favourites are still alive and doing good service. His father spent the last few weeks with Jack in London, and accompanied him as far as Gravesend, where they parted.

Jack sent a few hasty blotted lines to his 'Ever Hon^d^ Father. . . This is onely to present my duty unto you and to begg your blessing w^ch^ I did not the last night.' He wrote the next day from Deal: 'Yesterday about 6 a Clock I set forward from Gravesend and went to Sidenbourne 18 miles on this side; from thence this morning I departed and came first to Canterbury 15 miles on this side, where I was forced to stay 3 or 4 houres because horses were scarce, and indeed but 2 to be had all over y^e^ City, and them very deare, soe that I went to y^e^ Cathedrall and there heard servis said and sung by y^e^ Coristers; after which I came to Deale, and there found that the Convoy was gone with a Smirna shipp. Here I am likely to stay, for y^e^ wind is soe contrary that our shipp cannot come over the flatts. Here is not at present any merchant shipps at all; before the towne lieth y^e^ Monke frygot, now admirall of y^e^ Downes, as alsoe another of His Majestyes frygots.' To Mun he says: 'For your expences, gifts, and troublesome journey, thanks April 29, 1662.

[1] '*Noate of divers things provided for Jack's voyage:*'

Holland for caps, 'hanketchers,' and doublets	£1	7	0
Lace for the caps		4	9
Cloth for 2 Pair of Socks		3	6
6 Pair thread stirrup stockings		16	0
'2 Garnish of buttons' for 2 Handkerchiefs		3	4
2 Pair of white Stockings	2	0	0
6 p^r^. of Shoes and 1 pr. Slippers	1	9	10
7 p^r^. Gloves		9	0
A Sea Bedd and bolster, Rugg, and Pillow	1	17	6
and Tailor's bill for	£16	10	0

are to small; brotherly affection I have none to add to that w^ch^ I had for you before; returnes in their same kind is for me you know impossible, soe that I must remayne your debtor for everything.' He was delayed till the 4th of May, when he writes his last letter to his father.

'This morning before 8, God willing, if y^e^ wind holds, I shall set sayle for Livorno whether God send us in safety: truly I am very glad wee shall depart soe soone, for this is a very cut-throat place, and besides for a farther helpe to away with money I was faine to lay in 20*s.* more for fresh provision, by reason that one of our passengers is fallen sicke and soe wee casted up our money short, soe that wee lay in 6*l.* a peece. Sheepe cost us here 22*s.* y^e^ sheepe: hens 3*s.* y^e^ couple: barley 40*s.* y^e^ quarter: oats 3*s.* y^e^ bushell: duckes 2*s.* y^e^ couple, etc.; they have not bene knowne soe deare this good while, but there hath beene such great shipping of late that all things are deare. Most of y^e^ Poultry is now ingrost for the Jamaca shipps, soe that we had much adoe to get 40 couple notwithstanding it is market day at Sandwich. Sir having but little time I humbly begg your blessing, prayers, and leave to be your most humble and most obedient sonn.' Mun's affectionate note in reply to Jack's last cannot have reached him; it was chiefly to say

May 5, 1662. —'The Love of Heaven be with you and blesse you, my deare brother.'

The journey to Aleppo was accomplished in 3½ months. Jack wrote home every few weeks as occasion offered. Having fallen in with a homeward-bound frigate off Cape St. Mary, he has time for a hurried note to his father.

May 14, 1662. 'On May the 6^th^ we mett with the Queene [Catherine of Braganza] and the fleet her convoy, off of Faymouth.'

June 20, 1662. The next is from Leghorn. 'This is to advise you of my arrivall into this Port from whence I hope to be gonn in 8 or 10 dayes. I should have given you an account of my arrivall sooner but that I departed for Pisa, Florence, etc., to see those sights w^ch^ are at St. Jn's tide selebrated in the last city, where I have continued this 9 dayes. S^r^ it being very late at night and myselfe somewhat tyred having come

post this day from fflorence (w^{ch} is 60 miles) notwithstanding the heat of y^{e} weather and y^{e} Badd horses I shall conclude, assuring you to write you somewhat more larger by some Gentlemen w^{ch} lately came from Aleppo and are proceeding for England over land in 40 Dayes.' He comes across Dr. Kirton at Florence, who begs to send his old friend Sir Ralph his 'most humble servis.' Jack reaches Scanderoon on July 26, 1662, 'having toucht noe where but at Cyprus.' The 20th of August finds him arrived at Aleppo, whence he writes to his brother a string of requests; 'the shipps being upon departure,' he ends abruptly. His fair hair that Soest had painted so carefully 'being already almost all come off,' he asks for a wig, and he 'must goe in the Turkish mode before it comes.'

It was a far cry from Mr. Gabriel Roberts's back shop in the City, where the bales of silk were weighed, to the flat white roofs, the domes and minarets of the mosques, and the burning sunshine of a Syrian summer, and we long to know something of Jack's impressions on arrival. The youth who spent the time, while waiting for relays, in attending the choral service in Canterbury Cathedral; and who rode sixty miles of dusty road twice over on bad post-horses, to witness the Feast of St. John the Baptist in the City of Flowers, must have had a mind that was not fed on 'marchants' accompts' alone. It was easier to ask for stirrup leathers and viol strings, than to write down what he felt on leaving the familiar surroundings of the English merchant ship to begin life alone on that glaring foreign shore; and it may be that as he folded and sealed his packet of home letters, his mind's eye was filled, not with the fine Moorish architecture, the strings of pack-camels, and the picturesque crowd of dark-skinned and turbaned figures, but with the homely brick walls, the soft grey skies, and the branching elm trees of Claydon.

CHAPTER XL.

THE NEW DISEASE AT CLAYDON.

1657–1658.

A CERTAIN form of fever and ague, known during the time of the Civil War as 'the New Disease,' swept over several counties in 1657–8, carrying off many familiar faces at Claydon and Hillesden, and uniting in a common death men who in life had long been foes and rivals.

The epidemic broke out in the Claydons at the close of a hot summer, and soon spread to the House. William Gape describes how people are flocking up to town from the country districts to avoid infection. Sir Ralph, on the contrary, who is away on a visit, hurries back to Claydon to do his best for the sick in the villages as soon as he hears of the outbreak. Mrs. Westerholt is ill, and one after another of Sir Ralph's servants and workmen are disabled. 'The Bay Mare is unable to fetch the bricks,' she has been lent 'to Roger Deely, to fetch a surgeon to his sonn, whose Heele is gangreaned.'

Aug. 13, 1657.

Aug. 27, 1657.

The Rector was next attacked: 'I am sorry to heare Parson Aris is in any dainger,' writes Dr. Denton, 'I pray God fitt him and us for life and death. I long to heare of him. There is one dead of the plauge this weeke att White chappell.' The Rector's strength did not hold out for many days; he died on August 29. The Doctor is 'heartily sorry for Honest Parson Aris. I doubt she will not live longe after. For all the little Peekes that were betweene you, I wish noe worse may succeed.' 'I am confident,' writes Penelope, 'Mrs Aris is a very sadd widdow, I pitty her with all my hart.' Sir Ralph desires to have

Aug. 31, 1657.

'the 2 Church Bookes, or any such publique papers or noates concerning the Church or Towne . . . all papers concerning the Parsonage as letters & noates, and all papers or letters concerning any differences between Mr Aris & me, or my Father and Him, that they may be burnt.' Mr. Aris was buried, on September 1, at Middle Claydon, having been Rector of the parish for twenty-seven years. The last time his name appears in the registers, which he had written up so carefully, is in May 1711, at the burial of 'Thomas Faulkener formerly Dairyman & Servant to Mr Aris, Rector,' who had kept his master's memory green for more than fifty years. Ralph Roades, the truculent parish clerk, lived out the century, but his brother the steward, Mr. Aris's doughty opponent and rival, sickened with the same disease.

Sept. 17, 1657. Sir Ralph writes to Lady Warwick: 'Madame, I had not a servant to send to satisfie my selfe of the condition of your health, for all these parts have been sorely visited, and particularly this very Towne, in soe high a manner, that since I writ last to your Ladishipp, heere hath been 40 or 50 sick at a time, whereof the Parson, and 8, or 9 more are already dead, and at this hower many are dangerously sick, and still sicken dayly. I thanke God my selfe & sonne are well, but (excepting one) there is not a man servant in my house that hath not been very ill, and are yet soe weake, that I am forced to hier others to assist & tend them'; which recalls our own household experiences of the influenza. Mrs. Sherard is in the same case: she herself 'hath gott this new disease, or a longe tertian or a Quarterne, be which it will, it handles her very severely, and there went 7 or 8 one day sick out of her house that came well in.' She herself writes: 'On my well dayes I macke A shift to creepe downe to diner and have a good stomack to my meaght, but I am faine to eaght but A litill.' Sir Roger's family had also 'drunk pretty deeply of that cup.' The Doctor considers that 'London is the healthiest place.'

The same epidemic is mentioned by Lady Fanshawe,[1] as 'a very ill kind of fever of which many died, and it ran

[1] *Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs*, p. 125. London, 1829.

generally through all families'; she and her husband and household fell sick of it: she ate 'neither flesh, nor fish, nor bread, but sage posset drink, & pancake or eggs, or now and then a turnip or carrot.' Lady Hobart had a more comfortable prescription. 'If you have a new dises in your toun pray have a car of yourself & goo to non of them; but drinck good ale for tis the gretis cordall that is: I live by the strenth of your malt.'

Will Roades's illness ran its course, and the anxiety about him was increased by the fact that Dr. Denton was unable to be with him. The Doctor had been overworked all the autumn. 'I was at Malden, where there is a very sick house,' he wrote; 'Charles & Dick [Goode] both sick, but recovered and about the house; & yett last night I was sent for post [from his farm on the Fens] for that Charles had fainted away. W. Gape is now with him, & how he doth I know not. Ben Moorwood, who married his sister, I doubt will dye of this new disease, there's alsoe 10 sick att this time in M^r^ Harvey's house. It reigns generally, I pray God blesse us all & fitt us for life and death.'

The Doctor went on to Thame Park to attend his old friend Lady Wenman and a young Hobart, who was taken dangerously ill of small-pox while on a visit to her, '& it's now my business to get a lodginge for him at Thame soe fearfull are they here.' He wrote thence: 'I longe to heare how Will & Michaud & Charles doe, and what you have done to them. I see noe daunger of W^m^ R: & if he had followed your advice by taking of a vomitt & if that had not done it, then to have beene blooded, I beleeve he had beene well ere this. It is the best thinge & the surest & quickest he can yett doe, therefore I pray lett him have one yett. 3 full spoonfulls of the vomitinge liquor in possett drinke will doe well, & he may abide 4 the same night when he goes to rest; let him take the weight of vi^ds^ of Diascordium, the next day or the next but one, he may be blooded in the arme about 20 ounces.'

Sept. 19, 1657.

On the same day Sir Ralph wrote a long business letter to Roades. He had been to inquire after the steward's sick

daughter Miller, 'who rested much better this night. I hope she & you will mend too.'

The Doctor, mindful of Sir Ralph's anxieties, writes again from Thame Park: 'Hobart died on wenesday morninge & which is worse, his death was occasioned by 3 daies excessive drinking, he was buried in Thame church, with such decency as these times & my Lord's family could afford. . . . I longe to hear how W^m^ R. dothe. I pray make my excuse to him that I could not see him, for really I am extreame sorry that it fell out at such a time, that I could not possibly stirre, and indeed I have been soe tied to attendance, that I have not made one visitt since I came but to Wheatfields [to the Ishams], & which much discomfitts me I have not one horse that I can bestride with pleasure. Kate, after her love & service to you for your invitation, saies she thought you had more witt, then to invite people to trouble you when your Cooke & the other servants are soe sickly.' Sept. 25 1657.

By the time this letter arrived Will Roades was beyond the help of earthly remedies, and on the 28th of September, within a month of the Rector's funeral, the Steward was laid beside him in the little peaceful churchyard. The loss of these two men was a heavy blow to Sir Ralph, though he had been quite aware of their failings; they had grown up with him, and both Parson and Steward were part of his familiar life at Claydon. 'Old friends are best,' Selden said; 'King James used to call for his old shoes: they were easiest for his feet,' and Sir Ralph agreed with King James.

Roades had gone on with his work to the last, and letters about the estate kept arriving for him during his illness and after his death. But all Sir Ralph's punctuality and preciseness had never made his steward into a good man of business. 'I am much troubled your man Rodes has left your accounts soe imperfect,' writes Nat Hobart, 'but alas poore man he was taken away soe suddenly that I beleeve he had not time to perfect them & his owne too.' Of the account he had to render to a higher than his earthly master, we may hope he had not been as unmindful; he July 28, 1656.

July 28, 1656. writes in one of his untidy scrawls to Sir Ralph, 'Only let me intreat you to pray for me to god so much as to keep me his servant which is my continual prayer, and then I hop my death will not com suddenly.'

John Roades was as little fit to succeed him in the management of the Claydon estate as Richard Cromwell was to succeed his father in the government of the Commonwealth; but, happier than Richard, the chance was not given him of displaying his incapacity. Sir Ralph took matters into his own hands, and wrote after six months of this ex-

March 29, 1658. perience: 'I have been & still am (besides all my other businesse) on such tickle terms with some of my tenants, who (contrary to my agreements & expectation) endeavour to kick upp 3 or 400*l*. a yeare into my hands at a few dayes warning, that I canot stirre a day from home, having too frequent occation to make new treaties with one or other of them, & haveing noe Bayliffe I am forced to doe it all myselfe.'

William Gape, the excellent apothecary, was also ailing

Oct. 9, 1657. in that sad autumn of 1657. 'My voyse is lower then ever,' he writes, 'my throate more soare, and which is worst of all I have suffered a great difficulty of breathing this fitt. These are all alarmes to tell mee whither I must goe and that my winter quarters are preparing for mee. God almighty sanctifie all these signes to mee that I may make a right use of his mercyes et fiat voluntas Domini.'

Nov. 17, 1657. Edmund Verney was ailing also with 'a loathinge of meat and queaziness of stomach,' and Dr. Denton wrote quite anxiously: 'We see younge men drop as well as old, and we cannot be too carefull one of another, our number decreasing soe dayly.'

The filling up of the living gave Sir Ralph great trouble; he dreaded above all things that an aggressive Presbyterian or Independent should get hold of it. His neighbour, Mr. Duncombe, had recently appointed a clergyman to his living of Brick Hill, and a minister very distasteful to him had, at the same time, obtained the promise of it from the Government. After a protracted suit, Mr. Duncombe's nominee had been

obliged to retire. Sir Ralph was determined that no applicant should be able to represent his living as vacant, so the breath was scarcely out of Parson Aris's body before he had offered it to the Rev. Edward Butterfield, of Preston-Bissett, of whose talents as a peacemaker he had retained so agreeable an impression. Mr. Butterfield, who was a widower with children, accepted with alacrity; but this was only the commencement of the business. Besides a 'donation or a presentation, or both,' he was to produce a certificate that the parish desired him for their minister. Fortified with all the documents he could collect, Mr. Butterfield went to town to go through the searching ordeal of Cromwell's 'Triers.' The Protector was more anxious to secure ministers of high character and learning than to test their theological orthodoxy by any narrow standard. It was not, therefore, Mr. Butterfield's Church doctrines that were the subject of inquiry, so much as his past life and ministry. The Triers had a wholesome distrust of testimonials, and accepted recommendations from those men only whose personal knowledge of the candidate was both intimate and recent. But having courted a safe obscurity in his rural living, it was difficult for a country parson of the old opinions to find a 'Commissioner Minister' from whom he could obtain the required recommendation.

'At my coming to London,' writes Mr. Butterfield, 'missing of the Doctor, I went to Sir Orlando Bridgman who told mee I wanted a Minister's hand to my certificat, and wisht mee to take witnes with mee to deliver in my presentation; so Mr Gape went w^th^ mee about it. Then I was informed the like of the defect of my certificat, thereupon I took my horse intending for the country, but because they told mee I must have some Comissioner Ministers hands, or that were well known to the Tryers; I went to two Comiss: Ministers that I had a little acquaintance w^th^ (not knowing any such neere us) who gave mee this test: that they had some personall knowledge of mee, & did verily beleeve that which the gent: had certifyed was true. With this I went back to the clarke, Sept. 10, 1657.

who assured mee this being yet short of the words of the Ordinance, would hardly passe; so I went to a Minister in London well known to the tryers, . . . who gave mee this test: that he had long since known mee to be a person of a godly sober blameles conversation, which are the words of the Ordin. yet by reason of this restrict *long since*, I doubt whether it may be sufficient: there hath beene no full comittee since my coming up, so that it hath little retarded my busines, onely it hath much saddened my thoughts and put mee somew^{t} out of conceit wth the busines. I delivered your letter to M^{r} Drake, who gave mee very good words, after sent mee a letter to one M^{r} Cooper, one of the tryers that lives I know not where, and if he can, will be at Westminster fryday. Sir should these yet fail, I would desire you to send this inclosed to our Minister at Preston, and if he can returne it to you or send it up by our Carrier to be heare ready against Wednesday next I shall attend it so long, els I must intreat you to pitch upon some other person as soone as you can that you suffer not by more delay. I am Sir your very sad but true friend & servant.'

Sept. 12, 1657. Sir Ralph loses no time in replying: 'Mr. Butterfield,—Last night very late I received yours of the Tenth instant, & have already sent away your letter to M^{r} Pepps at Preston, who I presume (if hee bee at home) will dispatch your businesse, ... I am resolved to doe all that in mee lies to place you neare mee, therfore bee not sadd, but rather let this little opposition make you more sollicitous in the businesse, & assure your selfe you shall not bee forsaken by your most affectionate friende to serve you, R. V.'

Mr. Butterfield, having at length satisfied the Triers, found a hot discussion raging, on his return to Claydon, between Widow Aris and her brother-in-law Nick as to the late Rector's liabilities: both appealed to him to settle the dispute. The din of battle lasted several months, apparently to the great satisfaction of the disputants. But another question touched Mr. Butterfield more nearly. The rectory was much out of repair, it would be 'unhabitable for such a crazy person as I am all the winter:' his claim for dilapidations

against Mrs. Aris was a heavy one. He wrote to Sir Ralph in some discouragement. 'I hope God will some way or other answere my desires, either by enabling mee to undergoe & execute successfully what I have undertaken, or by presenting some fitter person to your approbation, to whom I shall cheerfully resigne all that little interest I have, & conclude the latter part of my dayes in peace & silence.' Mrs. Aris's voice seems to be ever ringing in his ears. 'Sir, I have, with as little satisfaction to myselfe as to the parties litigant, composed the matters in suit between Mrs. Aris & Nick Aris, & I have now the 15*l.* controversy in hand, as full of difficulty as the former every whit. How the wit of man should reconcile these contradictions & absurdities, maintained with such high protestations & improbabilities I see not. For my part I despair of receiving satisfaction, yet if things are not too foule, I am resolved to make an end of it. Tis pitty the dead man cannot be raised againe to resolve the riddle. I could even venture my Parsonage for satisfaction.' He compounded for his first-fruits, which came to 3*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* Sir Ralph desires to hasten the business, 'for I respect you soe much, & love you so well, that I am confident I shall like Claydon much the better and spend more time there, when you are settled in it.' Feb. 14 1658.

Did the gentle Mr. Butterfield, who was nervously anxious to conciliate everybody, find it a task beyond his powers to dislodge Mrs. Aris, to take possession of her old home, and to wring from her the ever-odious charges for dilapidations? Report said that she had taken to her bed with grief and vexation, which must have increased the difficulties of the situation. Whatever the explanation may be, scarce eight months of the lady's widowhood had elapsed before the fresh incumbent, with great submission, laid his heart and fortune at her feet, and married her with the least possible delay. So the ghost that troubled the new Rector's slumbers was laid; and though the dilapidations were further 'ravelled into' by the Patron and Cousin Dormer, the amount was a matter of indifference, now that Mrs. Butterfield could pay it out of one pocket into the other.

There are few comments in the letters upon the marriage. Aunt Isham lived sufficiently far away to say with a clear conscience that she thought it 'as sutable a mach as could be; but what with M^rs^ Aris' grife & her sicknes I thought it could not a bine so soone. And talkes will goe, for I was tolde all this tattle as she was abeade when she was maried . . . but I tolde them noe such thinge . . . but women doe mad thinges sometimes.' It was not the woman who seemed to be doing 'mad things' in the opinion of Claydon, but Sir Ralph prudently held his tongue, and was content to execute his friend's wedding errands in town. 'I would intreat you to remember mee in a bargaine of chaires & stooles for my Parlour,' wrote the Rector, who was refurnishing with great zeal, 'if you happen to light on any you think fitting: & I think 6 pieces of hanginge, if met with accidentally at the second hand, might all things considered be easyest had to furnish up the roome; but in this as in all other things I am willing to submit to your better judgment.' 'I would gladly bestow a matter of 8*l.* in Wainscot for my parlour,' he wrote again, 'rather then go to a much higher price for Hangings, & then I should like very well this painted lether for a suit of chaires & stooles, & Carpet too for it; but that may be resolved on timely enough, when the wainscot is ready to set up.'

Jan. 3, 1659. He asked Sir Ralph to consult Dr. Denton about 'Sister Tayler,' who was 'piteously afflicted with a strange infirmity in her stomach . . . that doth still follow her.' The lady, however, to Mr. Butterfield's great annoyance, had not patience 'to expect an answer from London, but must needs send for one of the Mountebanks from Bucks, who tells her she is past physicke, but makes no question to recover her with looking on her, telling her 2 or 3 senseless stories & taking some of her moneys.'

In the troubled months of Richard Cromwell's protectorate, when all England is tossed about with uncertainty, Mr. Butterfield is comfortably settled at Claydon Rectory. 'The dangerous aspect of our state affairs troubles my thoughts not so much in reference to my own condition as

the-publique good.' He writes two days before Richard's fall: 'Tis a pleasant time in the country & quiet; onely trade-ing is dead & most men are full of feares.' Mr. Butterfield became the founder of a dynasty; he and his son and grandson were Rectors of Middle Claydon for the next hundred years, as the marble tablet in the church records.

The 'ill wind,' which had at least brought a benefice to a good man, was still blowing in Bucks, and on October 17 1657, the young Squire of Hillesden was carried off. The Civil War had laid heavy burdens upon shoulders too young to bear them, and Edmund Denton, as a mere boy, became the owner of an exhausted estate and of a mansion in ashes. With careless generosity he had squandered his wife's large fortune. Dr. Denton had repeatedly counselled prudence. He wrote to Sir Ralph: 'I knew not (though I advised it a yeare or two since) that Mun's resolution was to leave Bucks & to goe & live like Hermit poore in Glocestershire . . . it is most high time. I have examined his debt & I finde it above 17,000*l.*, besides Annuities, shop-bookes etc: soe that I cannot thinke it lesse then 20,000*l.*, and it is encreased in one yeare above 1,000*l.* This will eat while he sleepes. We have advised with Ned [Fust] about it very seriously & very sadly you may thinke; & it is concluded that parci-money will never pay it, noe nor a small sale. His wive's Land must pack, where in his power, which some say will pay 10 others 8, but we reckon betweene both, 9,000*l.* . . . Cowley we say alsoe must pack, & some part alsoe of Hillesdon. This tasts bitter, but rather soe then all. Hee had better expose to sale then be driven to it. . . . It is noe time to have any differences with relations, neighbours, noe not clownes . . . or there will be a quarrel with the whole Bench. I have taken this thorne also out of his foot, to putt it in myne owne. He must not displease, a mere recog-nisance to him would be his ruine, noe man would dare buy of him, except Robbin Hoods pennyworths,[1] which would be his ruine. It was his & my father's ruine to sell only to pay interest, he hath hitherto but ridden the same horse.

Dec. 11, 1655.

[1] Pieces of land sold for half their value.

I am soe concerned for his condicion that it breakes me many an houres sleepe.' Dr. Denton's fine schemes of retrenchment were seldom carried out.

In the previous summer a hastily scrawled note had reached Dr. Denton from Edmund's next brother Alexander:

Aug. 1, 1656. 'I am much troubled for my Brother [George]. I can hardly persuade the Doctors to come to him, for they say they cannot helpe him. Neither can I procure a Minister to come to him, which troubles me very much hee being so insensible of Dying; for I cannot but lament, & wish & desire the prayers of you all for him, who I doubt cannot now pray for himselfe.' George died the following day. His will is full of affectionate bequests to his brothers and sisters: he desires that his debts should be paid 'out of the moneyes lately received of Richard Berin, Linen draper.' He left to 'Mr William Okley 40*s*. to preach my Funerall sermon,' and desired to be buried 'in the Chancell of the Parish Church of Hillesdon at the discreation of my deare Brother Edmund Denton Esqre.' In little more than a year his elder brother was laid beside him.

'This particular Mortalyty to this sweet man' afflicts Cary extremely, 'so affectionat a frend as Mun Denton, so faithfull & good humoured A persone is rare to find.' Mrs. Isham also missed her nephew sorely; the older relations could always count upon a welcome at his board. She writes the next spring: 'I sent our nue man to call att Hilsdon & bringe me worde how they all doe, & but that I send to see them now & then, they may be all bureid a Live for any thinge I heare frome them selves: and sure itt would be contente to my minde if I could not thinke of them so much as I doe, but I loved the good man so well as is dead, as I shall love them I feare how ever. I cannot rite noe more itt doth so troble me.'

Alexander Denton, some seven weeks after his brother's death, is at Hillesden and is anxious lest the widow should break through the strict etiquette of mourning by paying a quiet visit to a brother-in-law, and refers the

Dec. 3, 1657. question to Sir Ralph. 'Sir, My sister Denton having very

often upon all occasions most earnestly expressed mee to let her know if either I knew or heard anything shee did, or was like to doe, that might Argue any disrespect to her deare deceased Husband: shee alwaies professing her selfe altogether extreame ignorant of these sad ceremonyes of mourning; although I am confident most expert in the reallity thereof: And I finding her departure hence to my bro: Woodwards so soone as her dolefull moneth is out, to bee by some very severely censured, now her chamber & house & servants are all in theyre black attyre Thought myselfe very much engaged to let her know the sense, if I myselfe knew, whether it would also appeare so bad in the world, or that it were the custome not to remove in such case; of which beeing altogether Ignorant I have therefore made this my Addresse to you . . . earnestly desiring your opinion herein with as much speed & privacy as may bee, what is the custome, & how her departure in this case is like to appeare in the eye of the world.' In the interests of the poor young widow, and her three little boys, we should have preferred to submit the matter to Dr. Denton; Sir Ralph was sure to be on the side of the 'ceremonyes,' but his reply has not come down to us.

Lady Gawdy was celebrating a great event in her family, the marriage of her eldest son Charles to Lady Mary Feilding, 'the pretty daughter of my Lord of Desmond [later Earl of Denbigh] with 4,000*l*.' Doll Leeke complains that he had been too much run after. 'I am sorry for our sex, for thay goe a beging,' but he is 'fixed at last.'

She writes from Croweshall: 'Mr Gaudy was maried one Saterday was fortnight and at this time all the company is at Crowshall. You may ges how full our hous is whan my lady & all hir faimily of women ly in the vane rouff over the dining chamber. We have a prety bride & thay are I belive very will plesed with one another. . . . Emes the wine coper & Blaynes brother has bought Gidy hall [Lady Gawdy's own property]: they give 9,000 pound. My dear lady grevs that it should be sould to such mean parsons. . . . All our company is gon to se Helmingham, Sept. 4, 1657.

Sir Lionell Tallemachs hous. I stayed at home to right this. . . . My lady is gon with them. . . . The bride & bridgroom desirs your good wishes.' Nothing could be more charming than the welcome Lady Gawdy gave the young couple, when, after their short honeymoon, 'Mr Gawdy brought the Lady Mary home.' Lady Hobart writes: 'Now I must let you know the gret fam of dear Lady Gadys entertanment; it is sayd to be as much beyond them all as can be expressed, and in that order, as if thar had bin nothing to be don in the hous, but to wat on the compny. All the contry sent hur in presants she had 4 bras of bucks and fish and fruts and all good things, and when they cam hom, thay war met with in thre mils of the hous, with 6 scor hors of the gentill men and youmen, and at Debnham all the wemin with garlands and flours, and strowed them hom to the hous, whar my Lady and hur compeny and sarvants wated on hur, and the musick folowed her.'

Sept. 25, 1657.

Two other marriages announced to Sir Ralph by Cousin Stafford interested him extremely. 'The Duke of Bucks is maried to Lord Fairfax his daur; & the mariage of the Protector's daur to Warwick's sonne, is forthwith to bee solempnized.' 'My Lord Duke is with his bride,' writes Dr. Denton, '& my Lord Fairfax is come to town to mediate, I hear nothing yet of his reception.' The Earl and Countess of Warwick had become more and more influential in the Protector's Court; the Royalists said that he had made more money 'than any man who trafficked in that desperate commodity—rebellion.' Cromwell had a real affection for Warwick, and now the marriage of his daughter Frances Cromwell with Warwick's grandson Robert Rich was celebrated with great magnificence and attended by many persons of quality. The country seemed to have settled down under Cromwell's rule; even Henry and his grand friends wish to be reconciled with the powers that be. 'Kirke, My Ld Protector's Rider is dead,' writes Dr. Denton, '& H. V. would have succeeded, & tried my Ld Richard & Lord Claypole, but it seemes noebody shall succeed.'

Sept. 30, 1657.

Oct. 29, 1657.

Nov. 11, 1657.

Çousin Stafford sends a queer story to Sir Ralph in November. 'I heare Sir Arthur Haselrigg is fallen into a desperate nott, by defending a possession against the sherife and some troops of horse, which he did beate from a house and lande, which hee had recovered by law, and by a second verdict lost the same againe, and hee pursuing his opportunity upon the sheriff's recess for more aide, possessed himselfe of Newcastle upon Tyne, where in a hostile manner hee defends himselfe. This is Sir C. Packe's newes, which hee related something doubtfully ergo quer:' This letter was accompanied by 'a bundle of Sweet Briar plants and fine Figg setts,' for which Sir Ralph was to give him in return 'a dozen young wallnutt trees, as many Chesnuts & Almons, fowre young firs and a pyne.' Sir Ralph persevered with his improvements. Mulberry trees and red roses are being planted at Claydon; and '300 Asparagus Plants' arrive from a nursery gardener with some 'Double violettes blue & white, 100 of goodlie July flowres, sweet Marjoram & Lemon Time, & some Althea Arborea essence.' There are orders for 'new stone seats, 6 feet 9 inches long and 17 inches broad, and stone stairs in the garden,' and 14 feet of coping-stones for a balcony; and the house is beginning to look so comfortable again, and so well furnished, that Edmund writes in the summer of 1657: 'Of household stuff —I beleeve few gentlemen have so good or such great store.' July 17, 1658. Lady Hobart sends down from London some gilt leather and a piece of 'Pintado'[1] for 5*s.* 6*d.* which she thinks cheap, with 'fringe for the Pentado bed' and some Dutch tiles. Dr. Denton, who is to receive some money for Sir Ralph, writes: 'The gooses feathers will quickly be pulled, therefore be sure you have a Pegasus ready bridled, sadled & plated, & your Jockey ready stript; to carry the enclosed the next day & receave L'argent, but not to bury in Brick & mortar.'

Sir Ralph's next project was to have a deer-park, and

[1] An obsolete word, probably for a mottled stuff, whence the name Pintado for a guinea-fowl. Spanish *pintado*, from the verb *pintar*; Latin *pingere*.

the negotiations begun with Lord Monson in the Fleet Prison for the purchase of deer stretched over several years. Doll Smith writes of some deer offered to her husband:

Oct. 27, 1657. 'From my Lord Gray's park . . . but non but dows, & fawnes, and prickets[1] & prickets sisters . . . twenty shillins a peece for all thees, one with another, & that he must be tyed to take twenty brace of them for else they will not bestow the making of a cops to take them . . . if they be not honest they may send more fawnes than any other deare.' Cousin Smith, who is to divide them with Sir Ralph, says, 'Male Deere are my principle aymes.' Thomas Stafford writes about some 'of the wild beastes' he is getting Sir Ralph from Mr. Dodesworth, 'of Harrold Park, 4 or 5 miles beyond Owlney.'

June 2, 1657. After an infinite amount of negotiation Lord Monson is ready to accept an offer for his herd of deer at Grafton Park, Northamptonshire; Sir Ralph intends to buy them all, and then to divide them with Cousin Dick Winwood. The latter

Jan. 1, 1659. writes: 'Because you desire to know what price I can be contented to give, I doe as in all cases of purchase, ground myselfe uppon the markett, which is twentie shillings for every Deere above a Fawne . . . the purchaser being att all the charges of taking and bringing away, & thirtie shillings a piece to have them delivered to me att Quainton. I shall expect the full indevor of the Keepers to holpe me in the taking of them, and to paie my money when I receave them.' But even this transaction could not be carried through without political complications. Sir Ralph heard 'that Homan of Paulers Perry might doe good service in taking the deere'; but 'because he had sworn as a witness against my Lord, he knew not whether my Lord would like him.' Lord Monson's agent gave permission to 'bring in whom we pleased.' Upon this Sir Ralph felt himself authorised to employ this person of heretical opinions to catch the deer, but he did not escape 'my Lord's great wroath' for this 'indiscretion.'

The deer themselves prove to be as delicate and as easily

[1] The buck is called a fawn the first year, a *prickett* the second (see *Love's Labour's Lost*, iv. 2).

hurt as my Lord's feelings, and give occasion for many remonstrances and explanations on both sides. Two drown themselves in the park at Claydon, others sicken in the winter. 'It is an extraordinary trouble to me,' writes Holmes, the new steward, 'because my master delighted in them so much, I know not what to doe in the busnes but feed them, as well as may be.'

In the spring of 1660 'Cousin Winwood' is negotiating for Sir Ralph the purchase of 'my Lord Whitlocke's deere,' which has also to be discreetly managed, for 'if it bee knowne at Henley that the deere are sould, my Lord being now under a little cloud, they will endeavour to share with his Lordshipp, therefore the sooner & the privater the businesse bee doun the better.' The keeper is to provide 'the Toyles' and to assist in catching them; 'Winwood lends the Buckstalles. As for Waggons,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I shall provide them; if there is but (as you guesse) about 20, one Waggon and one cart will easily bring them, for the Load is nothing, my own wagon is very long and large, and I remember you brought home 7 Brace at a time in yours.' Doctor Denton mocked at the deer and their leanness, and at all the trouble they gave; he preferred horses any day. 'To upbraid your ill skill in pinguifyinge venison,' he writes, 'I eat yesterday a very fatt pasty of a Haunch, at Sir Orlando Bridgeman's.' But the deer were much admired in the country and it was Pen's opinion that her brother would 'sartanly mak a Princely Pallice of Claydon before he had don.' Sir Ralph was also buying swans to put into what he called 'my great navagable river.' Feb. 11, 1660.

The plots are on foot again in 1658. Dr. Denton writes: 'We had a most lusty search on tuesday night, and much securinge. There is J. Russell and Major Harlow both in the Tower. S^r^ W^m^ Waller hath been examined but dismissed on parole. I am like Ralph that winked and thought because he saw nobody that nobody saw him. I hope they have more feares and jealousies then there is cause for.' March 25, 1658.

'Will H. V. never have more conscience than to sell Jades not worth 20*l.* for 30*l.* Tell Henry that I much rejoice at March 31, 1658.

the pleasant journey he had to Newmarkett and at the Indian returne he made for his adventure thither. . . . I will give him 5*l.* for old Chamberlayne to carry me to Ely in Easter weeke and at my returne he shall have her againe for 4*l.* 15*s.* Desborow is married to her mother, who married St. John's son.'[1]

William Smith, who had narrowly escaped in 1657, was arrested now. He writes to Sir Ralph from his own house:

April 19, 1658. 'Sir, on Wednesday here came souldiers with a warrant to search for and seize horses and arms and to apprehend me, I desired to see the warrant, which was under Sir George Fleetwood's hand. I was in Phisick but they would not lett me stay untill the next day, there were many in the warrant besides my selfe, but not you, but since I came home I hear that my Brother Alex. Denton should say they were att your house. Sir George Fleetwood came the next day to Allisbury, and told me he had a commission and instructions to imprison all that were of the late King's party. I am confined to Mr. Kilby's house, and Mr. Stafford is my bedfellow. Sir John Burlaiy, Mr. Tyrringham, and many others are confined to other places, and some are put in the Gaole. We have liberty of the gardens and orchards of the house, and may goe into the towne or fields with a souldier, which I doe not trouble. Sir George gave me leave to come home this day with a keeper with mee, but I am just now returning againe to my old Quarters: where I desire not to see you, and from whence when I shall be delivered or upon what termes I know not. God's will must bee donne, under which I am patient. If the souldiers have not been as yett att your house it is my opinion that you goe to London and stay there till this business is over.'

April 22, 1658. 'It is said that the High Court of Justice will suddenly sitt to try those who are thought to be guilty, and till then I believe the goates and sheepe must keepe Company together.' Sir Ralph upon receipt of this news sent to inquire after Sir Justinian Isham, who when Royalists were to be 'clapped

April 27, 1658. up' was ever the first to suffer. 'Sir, I write now only to

[1] See *post*, p. 167.

know both how and where you are, and how you have beene, and are like to bee, for in these wretched times a man must bee alowed to bee a little inquisitive after his Freinde. For my part, I am yet at home, and soe I hope to bee unlesse some new and stricter orders ishew out. That very day the gentry were taken heere, I went to bury Sir Roger Burgoyne's Lady in Bedfordshire, little dreaminge of such a businesse. . . . I presume the heate is already over, for in these parts wee have had none taken of late, which makes me almost confident that this time shall bee escaped by Sir, yours etc., R. V.'

Sir Justinian replies: 'Sir, With divers other Gentlemen of these 4 Counties (under Mr [Major-General] Butler) I am at present under guard at Northampton, nothing hath bin yet declared to us, nor Major Butler yet seene amongst us; some particular men have laboured their freedom & hope to obtain it from above, but I cannot yet say who have it. It hath bin intimated to some that some declaration or acknowledgement is expected, but I heare no farther of it, & tis probable a great part may remaine here for some tyme, where most of us are visited with extreame colds and many taken with vomiting and purging. I am glad 'tis yet so wel with you, endeavor to keepe your selfe soe, none have bin brought hither since the first taking, and Sir L. Griffin hitherto excus'd by reason of his indisposition, your old Lord Brudenel heere, Lord Camden, Lord Cullen intra multos alios.' April 27, 1658.

Cromwell himself was full of trouble. Four months after the wedding celebrated with so much joy, his daughter, Frances, was left a widow, while still in her teens; and a few weeks after Lord Warwick had replied to the Protector's affectionate letter of condolence, he followed his grandson to the grave. The news reached Sir Ralph in one of Nancy Denton's childish scrawls. 'Sir I am forced to give you this trobill becas my father was sent for to my Lady Wharton's unexpectedly istardy . . . and my mother is sick a bed . . . truly I thinck that there was never so sickly tim this-mani years as it is now for truly all ouer house is sick, I think thar is not 5 that is well . . . all the newes I can wright you of April 22, 1658.

is that my Lord of Worik is Ded & died on munday morning.' There is a hurried line from Dr. Denton at midnight, having just returned home: 'My Lady Wharton beinge dead, & soe is my Lord of Warwick, I can say no more, nor advise you what to doe, but to eat & sleepe in quiett. Stow is the fittest for Harry [Sir R. Temple being in favour with the Protector]. Its thought many heads will fly, sound discoveries having been made.'

Lady Hobart urged Sir Ralph to come up to town, where he was wanted to swear to his father's handwriting, but it was the eve of the day he always kept holy, the anniversary of Mary's death. 'It is impossible for me to be there soe soone,' he wrote, 'for tomorrow I never stirre wherever I happen to bee.'

May 9, 1658.

The Protector was at the height of his glory that summer of 1658; a new parliament was to be summoned, and the Royalist plotters were at last thoroughly discouraged. Henry reports the fate of some of them: 'The good Dr, & Sir Harry, are both executed & this day the high court doth sitt again to trey Woodcock and another knight, whose name I have forgott.' Though the Royalists mourned Dr. Hewitt as an 'excellent preacher' and 'holy man,' most people felt that he and Sir Henry Slingsby richly deserved their fate, and even they would probably have been spared but for a second plot which came to light while their trial was actually proceeding; of those concerned in it Dr. Denton writes: '2 were executed yesterday & 1 reprieved when rope was about his neck.'

June 10, 1658.

July 8, 1658.

Henry also gives us the other side of the picture in the honour paid to Cromwell by foreign Powers: 'On tuesday last here arrived a parson of greate honor, whose name at present I have forgot [the Duc de Crequi] with a complement from the kinge of france to the Protector, & for the honor of our nation like to be nobley entertained by his Highness, for I dare say no imbassador whatsoever had soe greate an alowance as this courtier; 200*l.* a day for his table and other expenses, & logd at Brookhouse.'

June 17, 1658.

Henry keeps up his racehorses, and the Doctor is not

averse to a little quiet gambling. 'Harry and I have had this day a smart bout at Tables for colt Peterborough & my dun mare that is at Stow; & he gott but 2 games of the 21. Soe I have won ye mare though happily in ye sense I may loose by the match. . . . 100000 (I can allow you cyphers enow) thanks for Chesnut it is best to send her on Satterday [to Stowe] least Sir Rich: should be gone to the Assizes on Munday. . . . If my coach horses be out of tune, Kate will scold me into an Augure hole. Mal & Will are for Cheshire [Madcap has volunteered to go with them and to take Claydon on her way home], Kate is for Surrey & Wm. D. must be left all alone.' July 14, 1658.

Before the family party broke up Kate was to give a dinner, and there was a private joke between Sir Ralph and the Doctor about a savoury horse-pasty made at Claydon, the composition of which was to be kept a profound secret. 'Your precious clouted boxe, that brought the precious pye,' has duly come, but Dalton doubts that 'our London dames will be soe queazy stomackt as not to touch ye colt, but I have kept my councill hitherto.' Two days later he reports: 'Cooke Laurence's owne privy kitchen had noe such dish as colt pye, but noebody knowes what they have eaten as yett, noe nor Harry, nor dare not tell because Lady Longavile was at the feast. . . . I pray remember to get some body to back the colt as soone as may be, for I am like to have noe other for my owne saddle this summer.' He has journeys in prospect to 'Pittsberry, Audley Inn, & perhaps to Cambridge.' The horses are reported to be in poor condition, and the Doctor writes in comical despair, addressing the letter to his horses and their host: 'For his noble ffrends Don Diego, Hipporio, Radulpho Claydono.' July 22, 1658.

'Base, abominable, base newes indeed. I doubt my jades are growne as cunninge as theire Dame, I might say, as their Dr; loath very loath to goe from soe good quarters; that horses should goe 3 or 4 yeares togeather in coach & then jade it. It putts me beyond all patience, & soe confounds all my summer projects and progresses, that I am in a wood, & know not which way to turne my selfe. More horses I

like not to buy, haveing enough already, & to have none Kate will not be pleased.'

Wickedness does not go for ever unrewarded. Doll Smith and her mother planned a dinner at Ratcliffe at which there was much 'good company,' on purpose to give the Doctor 'a vengeance pasty' in return for 'colt pye.'

The new disease is rife again in the autumn of 1658. 'Lady Fiennes cannot recover,' Dr. Denton writes; 'I have given her 2 vomitts but it profitts little. I shall have a wonderfull losse in her, sed fiat voluntas Dei.' The precious colt and 'his keeper' are also ill at Claydon. The Doctor finds his materia medica within the limits of the old court-yard; the colt is ordered 'a groundsel purge,' and the man 'a stone crop vomitt' in repeated doses.

If the physician prescribed for horses, there was 'a Horse-Smithe' at Edmonton ready to do as much for 'human mortals.' Mr. Wakefield recounts apologetically,
Oct. 26, 1658. and not very clearly, how he had made use of him: 'I have had my two youngest Children, 4 Maydes & 2 men, downe at a tyme of this new Disease, & yett through God's mercy are all recovered againe, though I impute it under God, to a meanes that some people would have scrupled to have made use of his Phisicke, Hee being by profession a Horse-Smithe, and keepes a shoppe in our Towne. Butt hee having practised upon many others about us, before we made use of him, the successe his Phisicke hath had in our Family, hath much encreased his fame, and really I thinke nott without desart; for he gives you as rationall an Accompte for what hee doth, as any Phisitian that I ever yett mette withall. What I write is nott to derogate from the honour due to many Phisitians of quallity [*pace* Dr. Denton], but in the country, such cannott spend any tyme with us; and the trouble of sending soe farre too & againe, besides often tymes the mistakes and miscarriages of thinges, forces us to doe that which if we were in London, we should hardly venture upon.'

At Claydon Mrs. Westerholt kept various potent mixtures going, to be administered as the Doctor wrote her word.

He refers admiringly to that 'purginge drinke as she made for the maids & the upholsterer,' and suggests that some burdock seeds or root might be added to it with advantage. The upholsterer, as he worked in the house, was admitted to share the family privileges. Did he abuse the housekeeper's kindness and help himself too greedily? We know not; we only hear that the upholsterer is like 'to make a dye of it,' but then, it is added, 'he was always a delicate man.'

In the great world outside, Cromwell was busier than ever; the government of the country depended upon his personal initiative, and his powerful mind was full of schemes for reform at home, and fresh triumphs for the Protestant cause abroad. Then Lady Claypole, his daughter, fell ill, and the Protector watched by her bed in an agony of sorrow. She died on the 6th of August; by the end of the month he was himself struck down. No alarm was felt at first, and Cromwell had an intense belief that he would recover. While the life-and-death struggle was going on in the sick-chamber, a terrific storm shook all the south of England, and the Royalists said that the Devil had come to fetch his own. On the anniversary of Drogheda, Dunbar and Worcester, praying for those that hated him, and longing to be yet 'farther serviceable to God and His people,' Oliver Cromwell passed away. Sept. 3, 1658.

The quiet chit-chat of the family letters continues with no allusion to this event of supreme importance. Sir Ralph is expected at Croweshall, and Doll Leeke watches for the coach: 'I am gron lean with walking to meat you, & freting as I came back . . . If I thought you cared for it, I could be angry.' Jack at school was spending that very September afternoon in painfully composing a Latin letter to his father, with no reference at all to the absorbing topic that was being discussed in the street outside. We only hear later on from Lady Hobart: 'My Lord protector's body was Bered last night at one o'clock very privittly, & tis thought that will be [no] show at tall: the army dou bluster a letill: god send us pes for I dred a combuston.' About Nov. 11, 1658.

The expectation that there would be 'no show' was

emphatically falsified; there was a public funeral, magnificent and costly beyond precedent. The coffin lay for more than six weeks 'in open state' in Somerset House, and there was a wax effigy of Cromwell standing robed in crimson velvet (or, according to another account, in black), a sceptre in his hand, and a crown on his head. 'We are all a whist, no newes stirring,' writes Sir Roger Burgoyne, 'but that the old Protector is now gott upon his leggs againe in Sumersett House, but when he shall be translated to the rest of the Gods at Westminster I cannot tell. Pray, doe you come and see.'

Nov. 11, 1658.

'It is supposed that the great funeral will be about All Saints,' writes another contemporary. 'Henry the Seventh's Chapel is being cleansed.' But though Cromwell died on the 3rd of September the funeral was not till the 23rd of November, the oppressive ceremonial being rendered still more hollow by persistent reports of a secret burial. Some believed that this had taken place immediately after death, others that the corpse had been hastily buried a week before the funeral upon an alarm that the discontented soldiers meant to seize it as security for their arrears. Evelyn watched the 'superb' procession pass with the 'imperial banners, atchiements, heralds . . . guards, soldiers, & innumerable mourners . . . but,' he adds, 'it was the joyfullest funerall I ever saw, for there were none that cried but dogs, which the soldiers hooted away with a barbarous noise, drinking, & taking tobacco in the streets as they went.'

Though Evelyn looked on with hostile eyes, it was doubtless true that the procession evoked no reverent sympathy from the crowd. The profound lull that had followed the shock of the Protector's death was already giving way to intrigues and discontents. The French Ambassador, also an eye-witness, gives us a vivid picture of the close of this dismal pageant. The starting of the procession was long delayed by altercations in the Corps Diplomatique about precedence. The service was to have taken place by daylight, this delay not having been foreseen: but darkness fell

upon the short November afternoon. 'There was not a single candle in Westminster Abbey,' he writes, 'to give light to the company, and conduct the hearse into a sort of "Chapelle Ardente" which had been prepared; there were consequently neither prayers, nor sermon, nor funeral oration, and after the trumpets had sounded for a short time every one withdrew in no particular order.'

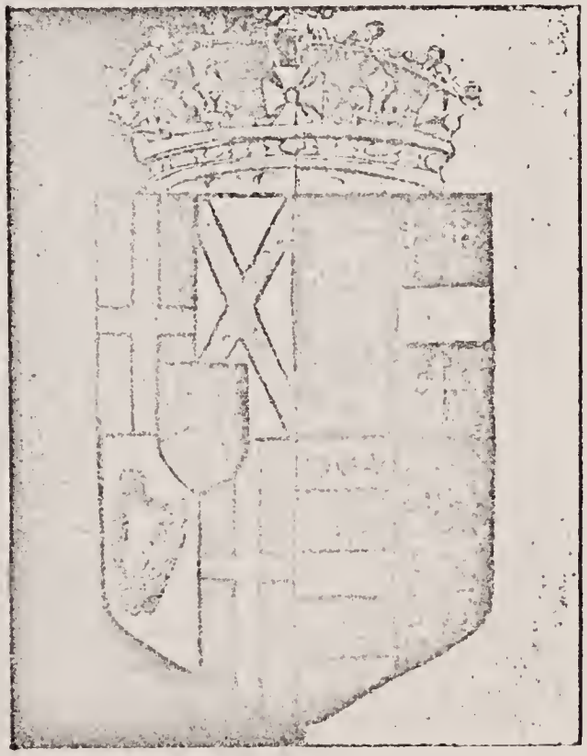
In the gloom of that winter afternoon the Westminster boys were marshalled to witness the ceremony. Less than ten years before they had voluntarily gathered themselves together to pray for King Charles as he was led to the scaffold, and all the Puritan governors, and the Presbyterian and Independent preachers in the Abbey, had been unable to extinguish the chivalrous loyalty of Westminster School. The boys were now stirred to speechless indignation by the various emblems of sovereignty they saw displayed in Cromwell's honour, and Robert Uvedale, whose family had been conspicuous for services rendered to the fallen dynasty, sprang forward through the legs of the guard, snatched from the bier the little satin banner known as the Majesty Scutcheon, darted back again, and before anyone could recover from the shock of the surprise was lost in the crowd of his schoolfellows. It would have been highly inexpedient at such a moment to arrest and search the Westminster boys; so the bit of crumpled white satin remained in Robert Uvedale's pocket, to be proudly displayed in after years, and preserved as an heirloom in his family.

This curious little bit of wreckage that has drifted down to us from the storms of the seventeenth century found a safe harbour in the dignified seclusion of the Bursar's Room at Lincoln College, Oxford. Its late possessor, the Rev. Washbourne West, was the lineal descendant of Robert Uvedale, and the name of every member of the family in whose keeping the relic had been was known to him.[1] The boy himself, a great-nephew of Sir William Uvedale, Sir Edmund's old friend, went on to Trinity College, Cambridge,

[1] By permission of the late Rev. Washbourne West the Majesty Scutcheon was photographed for the first edition of this work.

where in later years he was actually elected to a Fellowship in preference to Sir Isaac Newton. Behind the frame that enshrines the scutcheon is a long inscription, in Robert Uvedale's hand, beginning thus: 'Hoc Insigne raptum est a feretro tyranni Olivarii Cromwelli, cum effigies ejus cerea, regali cultu ornata, in ædibus Sancti Petri apud Westmonasterienses magnifice se ostentabat' &c.

The 'quiet bones' of the poorest men and women who fell victims to the epidemic at Claydon were at least permitted 'among familiar names to rest, and in the places of their youth'; but to the great man who had played so large a part in England's history this common privilege of humanity was denied. The body laid in the Abbey vaults with such exaggerated pomp of ceremonial was ere long to be dug up again by the jackals of the Restoration, in order that every insult might be heaped upon it that petty malignity could devise.



THE MAJESTY SCUTCHEON.

CHAPTER XLI.

OF WOMEN'S MATTERS IN DISTRACTED TIMES.

1656–1659.

Sir Ralph's sisters and lady friends were all, with one exception, Royalists; Constitutional Freedom was a cause for men to defend; Charles Stuart was a person for women to love and pity. The exception was of course Eleanor, Countess of Warwick; she had grasped from the first the importance of the issues, and had followed with enthusiasm every phase of the struggle. She was the recognised chaperon of the young Commonwealth whom other great ladies snubbed as a low-born and presuming creature. During the Protectorate she figured as almost our only Peeress, as well as being latterly stepmother-in-law to the Protector's daughter. But when, within a few months, Lord Warwick died, and Cromwell's family were so completely swept into oblivion as never again to influence English history, the widowed Countess was carried along by the tide, and Sir Ralph was soon called upon to arrange the settlements for her fourth marriage, with the Earl of Manchester, who was also wedding for the fourth time. Edward Montagu, Earl of Manchester, had always been too lukewarm a partisan to satisfy Cromwell, and was soon to welcome the incoming dynasty. Aunt Isham regrets that the Countess's mature charms and triple jointure were not bestowed on Sir Ralph, and writes, with an allusion to Mrs. Aris's wedding: 'I could wish that you was maried to the widdoe Warwick, ether a bed or up, so you had her anyhow.'

Sir Ralph and Mr. John Cary of Ditchley 'are careful to secure that Revenues, Rents, plate, jewels, goods & chattels

belonging to the said Countesse,' shall 'continue to be in her sole & personal disposal.' Splendid dress and furniture were coming once more into fashion in the latter years of Oliver's rule. Lady Warwick has 'a faire knot of gold, enamelled with Tulipps set with Diamonds'; 'a greate round jewell of gold, set round with Rowes of diamond, & one great diamond in the middle'; 'Ropes of Pearle,' a fan-handle of emeralds and diamonds, another fan with rubies, 'a sweet bag embroidered with pearles,' and 'sixteen dozen of buttons enamelled with black with a diamond in every button'—probably the ones shown in her portrait at Ditchley.

One set of her tapestry-hangings represents the four seasons, another in eight pieces 'a designe of flower-potts,' and there is 'a fine suite of landscape hangings with pillars, of 155¾ Flemish ells,' in five pieces. For the withdrawing-rooms are two complete 'suites,' one of 'blue wrought velvet, fringed with blue'; another in 'Crimson figured satten, with silk fringe & gilt nailes, 4 Crimson wrought window Curtaines lined with Crimson China Satten, & 1 greate Crimson velvet Cabinett'; each suite has 'chaires, stooles & carpet to match.' The bedrooms are furnished with equal splendour. There is a 'Crimson figured satten Bed, trimmed with Imbroidered buttons and loopes, with Carpet, Chaires & stooles suteable'; '2 little China Carpets with coloured silkes & gold'; 'one scarlet cloth bed lined with Satten, a Counterpane of Satten trimmed with gold & silver ffringe & a rich gold & silver ffringe about the vallins'; another room is upholstered in 'Carnation quilted satin,' and a fourth in 'greene cloth, with Isabella & greene silk lace fringes, lined with Isabella taffety, and sheetes edged with purle.' Her widow's bed is of fine black embroidery, with 'a sheete wrought with black silke shaddowed,' with black chairs, stools, and carpet to match. We also hear of gilt leather, and of carpets from Turkey and Persia.

When we pass to any family less sumptuously lodged than that of the great Presbyterian Earl, the women are as little able to vie with Lady Warwick in upholstery as in political intelligence and influence. And rare indeed was

the home in which the unsettled times had not brought a burden of painful retrenchment on its mistress. Law suits abounded, and quarrels engendered by the Civil War blazed up by the fireside as vehemently as those of Presbyterians, army officers, and Levellers in the world without.

John and Penelope Denton were still wrangling with his mother and his many creditors, and when he was not in Oxford gaol 'Pen's bruit of a husband,' as Doctor called him, was apt 'to lay her at his feet'; 'It is not long since that upon a slit occasion, he did cik me about the house.' They came to Claydon, but could never persuade Sir Ralph to visit them in return, though Pen drank water to keep her ale for him, and took his constant denials very ill.

Peg Elmes's 'disordered spleene,' and the imperious temper that distinguished her and her husband alike, led them in 1657 to discuss again the terms of a separation. Sir Thomas thinks that 'to part in Love . . . may increase it . . . donn in a way that nobody may know, certainly *guess* they will, but *know* they need not.' Peg's desire to detail her symptoms to every new doctor she heard of was a 'chargeable diversion,' and her husband's estimate of a proper allowance was most niggardly. Peg wished to live with Cary, and her sister was ready to welcome her heartily, 'if we can agree upon tarmes of diet & other conveniences which shee must have . . . Bot from an eldar brother's tabill & the command of a hous, & a coach & 4 horsis to an inconsiderabill younger brother, & a father of many children & a littell hous, it will be a great fall.' Margaret had fed so long on the 'stalled ox and hatred therewith' that she silenced Cary's scruples, but she proved a troublesome addition to the 'dinner of herbs' at Preshaw. To prepare for the trials of a small establishment she desires her brother to order 'a plain sillvor woch . . . as good a goeing one as I coulde, for I have it merely to know how the time goes away, & att Preshaw I am sertan, the nevor have ather clock or woch.' She is to pay 5*s.* a cwt. for the transport of her goods from London, and is sending them off, but being very unwell she lingers in the neighbourhood of physicians.

Sir Ralph fears her 'too greate love to London' may be misconstrued 'by Norton . . . and if you Falter with your friendes at Preshaw, perhapps theire mindes may alter too, and then I know not where you will finde soe fit, soe good and soe honorable a retiring place. By this time I know you are more then a little angry.'

Aug. 1658. Peg's displeasure fills two folio sheets: 'I may justly make yous of the owlde fraise & say you tooke me up be foare I was downe . . . sertenly brother you cannot thincke as I stay heare now out of love to the plaise, when theare is hardly a cretur in it that I know, but if theare ware, I hope I have nevor caryed myselfe soe . . . but that I may stay in any plaise . . . as I take the being parted from my husband as no wayes to my honer soe I take it for noe sich great dishoner as to be tied to live in obscurity all my dayes.' Sir Ralph calls her 'as captious a sister as she has been a wife' . . . 'steere what corse you please, you have now made it very indifferent to your Brother Verney.' Peg retorts, but at this point Cary and the Doctor insist that

Sept. 23, 1658. there shall be peace: 'Your Dr & you must not thinke to tell every body of theire faults and goe untold yourselves; you, if theire father had been alive, durst not use your sisters soe slightly & pick quarrels . . . for feare they should be a burden to you. . . . I know noe reason why we should be out of the common lot of all men. Christe himselfe had his share herein, he was a Samaritan & had a Divell, & why should we speed better than our Master?'

Sir Ralph once more took the Doctor's reproof in good part, and soon busied himself again in Margaret's interest. Before the fretful invalid settles at Preshaw, we may glance back at the family story of the Stewkeleys during the two preceding years.

There had been a sad outbreak of small-pox there in 1656; Cary had sent a note to a neighbour's house not knowing they had it, and the coachman brought back the infection. All the children and step-children sickened 'of this disease, as loathsome as dangerous'—'we ware all one among another, bot what fled.' The little ones should

have been sent out of the house, but their maid was away on a holiday, and 'infints are not essely disposed on.' Cary 'never went to bed in seven nights together besides many halfe nights'; she kept up while the children were in danger and then broke down utterly, whether 'from long woching,' as the Doctor said, or from 'a sorfet of eating pigg,' as she herself surmised, Mr. Stewkeley could not decide. He had in vain preached prudence, and could only hope 'that the seasonable advertisement of a brother, may make deeper Impressions then of a Husband in doing—of what many of us need noe remembrancer—to love ourselves. . . . As she lives in her children more then in herself, so I wish the result of her maternall care would center in the preservation of herself.' Peg Gardiner narrowly escaped total blindness and was 'much worne out,' she 'is to keep on a mask & searcloths this winter.' Ursula, who refused to do the same, is deeply pitted.

Cary hopes to be free from infection by Christmas—'set the norsary aside, ther is no danger, I have ared all plasis so well.' But prudence was thrown to the winds on the happy occasion of the wedding of a stepdaughter in November. 'Joy is coming into our house againe, for this day Page & Jane is marryed, & I wish more may follow . . . I am going to gine in Merth with the rest of our Company.' Ursula, with her deeply scarred face, and Peg with her mask and searcloth, were not very eligible bridesmaids. Cary's wish that 'more may follow' is explained by Ursula's conduct, who questioned her stepmother's authority on many points besides the care of her health and complexion. Another daughter, Penelope, Cary's third child by John Stewkeley, was born the next summer. Nov. 27, 1656. June 7, 1657.

In the spring of 1658 Cary is preparing once more for the wedding of a stepdaughter, Anne, three years older than Ursula, and much more amiable. The snow is still deep in Hampshire and has lain long. 'The flock hath eat nothing but straw this 6 weekes, nethar can ther sarvant help it for hay he had none, and if hee byes it hee must pay 4 pound a tonn and tis feared it will destroy the Feb. 17, 1658.

flock, bot look on the least harme it can doe them and ther woll must fall short, and bee an ill case to be sold off at mickellmas—nethar can they plow for barley.' She is nevertheless full of her hospitable preparations: 'For now I can acquant you that nancy is to be marryed to one Mr. Grove a wellshe gentelman of near 3 hondred a yeare in present possestion, he is young and hancome and, I think, very desarving every way, her banns are once asked, bot shee is not to be marryed till thursday senet aftar yesterday, and your company is so ernestly desiared that wee resolve to give you this timely notis. You will meat heare Sr John Cotton and his lady with some relations of his, bot tis only near kindred so wee acount it privat. Pray let not the smallnesse of our house disharten you, for I shall only troble you in haveing your sonn loay with you, which I hope you will bare with, in a great bed.' Sir Ralph hopes to come: 'But why do you Tantalize the poore young creature & make her keepe soe strict a Lent. I love not Fish & were she of my diet & humour (or perhaps of yours) certainly she might well account it a very greate severity.' Cary's household complications increase; she has extended her hospitality to Betty, though 'trobled with the speck-tikill of a discontented Sister'; Mr. Stewkeley's elder brother pays them long visits and must be humoured, lest he leave his money elsewhere; Daughter Grove returns later in a state when 'she is not to be crossed in anything'—and Peg Elmes is expected.

Feb. 19, 1658.

Betty is wild to go off to London—'Hid Parck and the cheries ther is veri plesant to me.' Cary is always pleading for her with Sir Ralph—'I cannot bot pety her when I consider the world hath frouned uppon her, in that she cannot regain her own, though tis A calamyty thousands have soffared with her . . . her misfortune was not to be bred under parents, so she was spoyled in her education by sarvants . . . we must bare with her the more.' 'Truly Sister,' Sir Ralph replies, 'if you yourselfe were of such a humour, that you should sit wishing for death & sigh & sobb & pout yourselfe into a sicknesse, could you then

with any confidence expect a more then common comiseration? . . . I must confesse your proportion of good nature doth very farre exceed my owne, for had I a sister in my house (nay a Wife) that would have beene noe better pleased, my stock of kindnesse & patience would have been soe wholly spent, that shee could not have been neare soe long suffered to inhabit there with me.'

When Peg was ill at Preshaw, 'Sis Betty,' to do her justice, 'did as much as any sarvant for her.' Peg had been 'even to death's dore, to coldness & stiffness these 20 daies'; her husband was 'in great hopes of her death,' and Aunt Isham considered that 'she would be Little Lamented, the more is hir misery.' But Death himself was in no hurry to possess Peg Elmes, and she managed to get back to town leaving her kind hosts much dissatisfied with the 20*l.* she had left to defray the heavy expenses of her illness. 'Truly I thought Pegg would a delt hansomber with me,' Cary writes, 'bot I will try my wits to make the best of it to my husband . . . as we came together in love so wee will part; bot I dare boldly say shee will not be so obsarved in any family againe in hast nor so waighted on.' 'Peg thinks she can live cheaper in London then hear . . . bot I have cast it up—80*l.* a year it will cost her, besids wine & breckfasting & washing & candle & bear; & for the coach 5*l.* a yeare, & hear she had two sarvants & thar will have bot one, & for fuell you may ges the diferanc. . . . The Dr heare thinks, bot shee is angry to heare him . . . if shee taks not much physick shee will be the better . . . all this is tresone.' 'I am shur a door did not shot hard in my hous bot it disordered her, though now it semes the noys of musick & so much company can be indured; & heare she did punctually take something every 2 howars or elc shee was faint. If Jornes can make one gaine so much stringth . . . I think it ware a good way for me to torn travelar: bot I thang God for the remove for I feind much ease to my mind & to my body sinc she went away.' 'Tis well Pegg could stay so long out of her chamber,' Cary writes again, 'hear was not a window cortains undrane & shee sat in

Oct. 22, 1658.

Jan. 4, 1659.

Jan. 11, 1659.

Feb. 14, 1659.

April 19, 1659. a clos wickkar char, with a rogg rapt all about her, & a choshen under her feet besids.' 'Doctors' Fines will be her constant chamber followars. Truly Dr Are & Dr Care is my chef physistions, though I am fain to have a more chargabill Dr many times, bot ther is one Dr Verney, would due as great a cuare on mee as the othar three.'

Of Sir Ralph's remaining sister, Mary Lloyd, there are few memorials during these years, except her piteous begging letters—'I have not a gowne that will hange on my Bake, it is so olde that as I mende it in one place, it teares out in a nother, so that I am clothed with rages . . . & all most nacked.' Robert Lloyd seems to have settled in Wales 'for there all things are cheaper.' Their son Humphrey was born in June 1657; in 1659 Dr. Denton and Mr. Gape are 'mediating with Sir Ralph,' to grant his sister a cow; and Mary writes —'Pray dericthe your letters for to be lefte att Mrs. Magdalen Lloyd's shoope in Wrixham for mee.'

Sir Ralph had set his heart upon a family gathering in the autumn of 1659. It was six years since Lady Gardiner had been at Claydon; it was difficult for her to travel either with or without her large party. John Stewkeley returns

Aug. 16, 1659. thanks, from 'Pickadilly,' for the invitation. 'The late noysis of riesings puts mee in a fear,' Cary writes later, 'that I have no fortune to see Claydon, the plas I do much long to be at; for if distorbances incres I would not be so uncevell to trobell your house, knowing strangers are unseasonabill at souch tims.'

Aug. 10, 1659. Sir Ralph urges Aunt Sherard to join them: 'Tis but a stepp to Claydon & my Coach shall attend your daughters and my Cozen Fust, when & where you please to command it, & for theire sakes I shall double my endeavour to save my Horses from the soldiers who at this hower doe swarme at Brickill, Stratford, Alisbury, & in some little villages neare me, & I heare are unruly enough in all places, but these only pass towards Cheshire, and make no stay in these parts, therfore you need not feare them. . . . On Mounday there was about a Thousand Foot marched through my grounds about halfe a mile off, & on Tuesday

some 5 hundred horse & Dragoons with theire Ordnance & 9 wagons of Ammunition & I was soe very a cloune as not to invite them to my house: but to bee more searious, God be thanked I did not suffer by them. I am informed that greater numbers of horse & foot then wee have yet seene are to passe very suddenly; all immaginable haste is made to reduce Chesheire, soe that I hope they will finde no leasure to bee injurious to me.'

Mun and Jack were at home, and so complete was the gathering that there is not a single family letter written to Sir Ralph during that month of September. It certainly required some courage on his part to receive his four sisters; they usually discovered in their old home some piece of furniture or linen which they claimed as a right under their mother's will, or begged as a favour. This time Pen and Peg took a fancy to the same chair, and called each other hard names about it; Pen considered that Peg's self-will 'hath grone up with her from her cradell; all together she cannot make her great brags, her one will, hether two, hath maide her unfortinate. . . . . I must follow Sister Gardiner's good humer and forget her ill humer to us both.'

Cary writes to her brother, on the way home, 'At the bare' at Reading: 'In souch paper as the Inne affords me, I cannot but let you know wee are safely arived at Reding before sunset, and your horsis have performed ther jorney very well. I acknowledg the gretest of thanks is due to you though I cannot expres it to you. I know by this time you have the hapy chang of your quiet which you could not have in souch a rout. My sarves to all your good company and till them I would have them pounc the pety-coat still and charg Hary to frighten Ante Isham with his ugly faces elc I shall take it ill.' Oct. 21, 1659.

Penelope and her husband stayed two months at Claydon, and John Stewkeley thus describes their return journey: 'The Squier had a sad martch to London: hee had a great contest with Pen for a place in the coach, but Scartlett was preferd before him: hee rode as near the coach as if his horse had been tied to it, and was wett to the skin before hee Nov. 3, 1659

came half way.' 'Soe he had noe good luck,' adds Peg Elmes, 'after all his long feasting.'

We can see Sir Ralph's carriages and the party of riders clattering into the market-place at Aylesbury, all splashed and dripping after fourteen miles of heavy November roads; we hear the hard words and hard blows exchanged as the passengers struggle for places in the public coach; while the Claydon servants, the post-boys, and ostlers are grinning to see Squire Denton foiled in his efforts to push past his wife in order to secure an inside seat for himself. No wonder that his ill-humour lasted beyond the journey; 'his black eye,' writes Brother Stewkeley, 'hath made him very nice of admitting any to see him since hee came upp; hee is scarce in charity yet with his playfellows, but time will doe it.'

Anne Hobart, staying with Daughter Smith at Ratcliffe, and looking back upon Claydon hospitalities, writes to Sir Ralph: 'I pety you from my hart, that you have so much compeny, but when I conseder how near and dear they ar all to you—it tis a recreaton, espeshally when it coms but sildom.'

Betty Verney returned with the Stewkeleys to Preshaw, where she relapsed into sad fits of grumbling; but it is impossible not to sympathise with the orphan girl, who had missed all the petting and spoiling that were her due as the youngest of a large family, or to wonder that she envied Ursula Stewkeley and Nancy Denton, whose caprice and wilfulness were viewed at home with an indulgence that Betty had never known. 'She holds her peace,' we are told, after a good scolding from Cary, 'only repeats often, how happy Ury is to have a father and uncill which dus all they can to help her to live in pleshur.'

CHAPTER XLII.

'TURNING WHEELS OF VICISSITUDE.'

1658–1660.

OLIVER CROMWELL is dead and gone, but his Highness Richard, the Lord Protector, rules in his stead. There is a pause of silence and expectation. For a moment it seems as if the good ship of State would hold steadily on her course, even though the strong hand has relaxed its grip of the helm and left her amidst gathering clouds to a feeble and inexperienced pilot. Dryden in his heroic stanzas to Oliver's memory could write with general acceptance—

> No civil broils have since his death arose,
> But faction now by habit does obey;
> And wars have that respect for his repose
> As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea.

But there are mutterings of the coming storm when Dr. Denton reports, in October 1658: 'The souldiers are not so quiett as I could wish, they would fayne a generall distinct from the Protector.'

In marked contrast to preceding years, the Verney letters are full of references to the state of the country during Richard Cromwell's protectorate, and the confusion that followed it; public anxieties once more taking precedence of private interests. Sir Ralph was eagerly watching every shift of the wind, but he was not too busy to write a charming letter to the ladies at Croweshall when Doll was planning a visit to town. 'Deare Cozen, I would not interrupt your London pleasures at your very first coming . . . but Cozen is it possible you should take a journey of 4 score miles in

Nov. 15, 1658.

this season, through such wayes & Waters, to visit London, & then stay but 8 or 10 dayes there? it cannot bee, for though almost all the World is changed yet you are still the same D: L: that dwelt at Claydon, & cañot bee guilty of such a crime soe highly prejuditiall to all your Friendes, kindred, & acquaintance, & soe absolutly contrary to your owne knowne Humour, & affections too; this were to forget your owne People, & your Fathers house indeed, if you lie under such a vow, tis better broke then kept. I must confesse when my Lady Gaudy is at Croweshall, the seate is good & pleasant, & that old House (in my conceit) excells the Louvre, & Escuriall; were her Ladishipp here, this House would doe soe too: her presence is able to consecrate all places where she comes; but I presume she is still at Hewzon, with her beloved sonne & daughter, delighting herselfe in her new acquired Title of a Grandmother.'

Mr. Butterfield, catching something of the general excitement, is taking voters to the election at Buckingham. 'I intend with God's leave if the wether be such as I may
Jan. 1659. safely venture abroade, to see the Knights chosen on Wednesday, & to take such as I can get to goe along with mee; most on this side will be for those two gent: but here is talke as though the Anabaptist party were like to carry it on the other side.' Sir Richard Temple was elected for Buckingham with Francis Ingoldsby, Esquire. Sir Roger Burgoyne did not stand, and his seat for Warwick was filled by Fulke Lucy of Charlecote. Odd little bits of
Feb. 21, 1659. gossip have survived. 'Sir H. Wroath in a drunken fit (as I doubt),' writes the Doctor, 'affronted Packer [M.P. for Wallingford] on the high way soe highly that he complained to the house of it, he is sent for as a delinquent.'

Cromwell, anticipating the reforms of our own day, had made some progress with a redistribution of seats in proportion to the changes of population. A reaction followed his death, and Dr. Denton rejoices that old Malton, where
March 2, 1659. the influence of the Eures lay, 'after much labour and sweat . . . hath a Joynt interest of electing Burgesses for Parl^{t} with new Malton, & soe the report is to be made to the house.'

'Dick's Parliament,' as it was called, met on January 27, 1659. Dr. Denton writes: 'I can tell you noe newes but that I graced the Parl^t House by makinge a simple speech in it.' In answer to Sir Ralph's expressions of surprise and curiosity he writes again: 'Soft Sir soft. It is not for Plebeians to know why we made our learned speech in the House. But because you tell me of such good newes of your favorite, I will tell you. At the Com^tee of Prividledges sittinge in the House, Mr. Howard having noe Councill there & being at a losse, I was fayne under the pretence of my neeces Interest to say some pretty simple things which was enough for Mons^r le Medecin to quack withall. However it was as wise as my L^d Barkstead, who uppon a sum̃ons from the com^tee of Greeviances for a false imprisonment came to the barre (they sittinge in the House) the bar beinge down, with his hatt off, & there was treated by the name of M^r Barkstead with out welt or guard, & made soe pittifull a defence that they have voted the prisoner (whose name I know not) free, the imprisonment illegal, & will take farther time to consider of reparacõns & you are welcome Gent. Coll: Tyrrell was in the chair.' Feb. 17, 1659. Feb. 21, 1659.

This incident caused much uneasiness to the Protector's party; while Oliver lived his arbitrary acts were submitted to as necessary to the public safety. John Portman, formerly Blake's secretary, was imprisoned, on Cromwell's own warrant, as a Fifth Monarchy man about to take up arms. Barkstead, the Lieutenant of the Tower, a brave soldier who dreaded nothing except having to make a speech, had deferred as long as he dared appearing at the bar of the House.[1] The warrant was pronounced to be illegal, and the prisoner ordered to be discharged, and thus a blow was struck at the existing government by the Republicans, under pretence of redressing a former wrong.

On the 22nd of April Richard Cromwell, yielding to the dictation of the Council of Officers at Wallingford House, dissolved the Parliament that had met in January. But the difficulty of raising money forced the soldiers to have recourse

[1] Guizot, *Richard Cromwell*, i. p. 89.

to another, and on the 7th of May, to avoid fresh elections, the fragments of the Long Parliament were pieced together and set up again at Westminster, under their old Speaker, Lenthall. In the meantime all authority was passing out of Richard Cromwell's hands. The Rump announced that they were to 'endeavour the settlement' of the Commonwealth 'without a Single Person or House of Peers'; but for eighteen days he lingered on at Whitehall. On the 25th of May, however, his Highness the Lord Protector sent in his abdication, which the House instantly accepted without demur, and 'Mr. Richard,' shorn of all his titles, was requested to retire from Whitehall and 'to dispose of himself as his private occasions shall require.' So easy is it to fall!

Honest, kind-hearted, and conscientious, but hopelessly discredited as a ruler, this 'mute, inglorious' 'Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood,' retired into complete obscurity, endowed with 'a comfortable and honourable subsistence' and with the people's nickname of 'Tumble-down Dick.'

And now the hurly-burly began in earnest. The 'Single Person' had disappeared, and the Rump and the officers were left to fight out the old question of the independence from civil control claimed by the army: 'The Saints, shouting for "the good Old Cause," wanted a pure democracy, while the Royalists were preparing in several counties to proclaim King Charles.'

'Lord Harry is sneaking,' writes the Doctor in June, with scant respect for the best of Cromwell's sons, 'and hopeing they will give him an Hon^ble livelyhood, & its hoped not.' The bills for Oliver's State funeral were still unpaid, the country could hardly throw them upon 'Mr. Richard' now, however unpopular this outlay had become, and matters were no further advanced by the order of the Council of State for 'the demolition of the chapel in which the late Protector's effigy was exposed.'[1] The House of

[1] M. de Bordeaux to M. de Brienne, June $\frac{8}{18}$, 1659 (Guizot, *Richard Cromwell*).

Commons had to be appealed to, and Lady Hobart writes in July of an Act 'to mack all pay for the morning my Lord protector gave.' There are 'rumours of many troubles but noe certainty of any.'

Penelope is chiefly anxious about Henry's safety. Dr. Denton had told her that 'there is a Banning coming out against such Rabble Rout as he is.' 'I pray god mak me so happy as that his Act against delinquents cannot touch my Brother.' The Doctor writes to Sir Ralph: 'I hope this will find you safe and sound returned maugre all rumors, feares & jealousies, which continue high here, still, & want for noe multiplicacõn caused by addition of Cyphers only, & not one reall significant truth that I know of. Offensive . . . Persons, Armes, & horses are secured in divers counties.' July 19, 1659. July 28, 1659.

Public anxiety is growing, a terror of a new civil war seizes upon quiet people; but the troops of the Parliament are successful. Massey, who is leading the Royalists in Worcestershire, is defeated and taken prisoner. Dr. Denton relates how he subsequently made his escape while riding in front of the trooper who guarded him: 'The horse stumblinge threw them both, by which meanes he escaped into the wood, & is not yet found that I heare of.' There is a warrant in August requiring Sir Ralph to send a horse to the George at Aylesbury, or 10*l*. 'to excuse horse & armes.' Aug. 4, 1659.

The Doctor next writes to Sir Ralph after the Parliament had despatched Lambert to crush the insurrection in Cheshire under Sir George Booth, and the greatest anxiety was felt in London. 'I hope you will be soe wise as to put the horses in the woods. I pray let your Favoritt's shooes be pulled off that she may goe for a colt. We all wished ourselves with you last night; this place was never so neare aflame, bussell, confusion which you will, as last night by the Judgm^t^ of all, & what will be the Issue a few more houres I ghesse will declare. We have all a mind to be out of the towne, but yett hopes feares, & jealousies doe soe distract us, as that we can resolve of nothing. I wish my papers & other things were with you, for we doe not thinke Aug. 10, 1659.

ourselves at all secure here. . . . The face of things may alter in a mom^t^, the battle not beinge alwaies to the strong nor the race to the swift etc; but the open face of things at this present appeares thus, viz. noe considerable force, if any at all, up anywhere but with S^r^ G. Booth, who with others are now proclaimed traitors, & ag^st^ whom there is gone a strong force. Desborough gone into the West to keepe all quiett there, with power to arm all 5^th^ monarchy men & the like; new militias raisinge in every county: The only thinge that lookes like countenancinge Sir George, is the intended peticõn of the city for a free parl^t^ as they say. This finds soe great opposicõns that for my part I thinke it can come to nothinge. I doe not heare of any one Cavalier in all this affaire, but that it is wholly on the presbytery, & those that fought & engaged for what they call the good old cause; the result out of the premisses is this, that if warrs continue the debt must encrease; taxes, free quarter, militia horses, besides the casualty of plunder must & will dock the revenew, & interest as bad as all these will eat like militia horses whilst you sleepe.'

Sir Ralph is full of gloomy forebodings; by reason of these new troubles he is obliged to suspend payment of interest to some of his creditors. 'I never yet fayled paying within the time, but if warres come God knows what we shall all suffer.'

Aug. 20, 1659. When the first rumours of Lambert's victory reach London Dr. Denton writes: 'As for Cheshire busines you must have a lusty faith & beleeve Lyes, contradictions, nay impossibilities, as that the castle is surrendered quietly, & yett taken by storme & every man put to the sword; that Charles Stuart is kept prisoner by ffrance & Spaine, & yett landed here; that Mountague [Admiral of the Fleet] kist his hand to daies since, & yett he & his navy will live & dy with the parl^t^; that Booth & Lambert are in treaty, & yett Lambert refuses to treat at all, & other stuff then this I can send you, & this I take it is enough to torture your beleife.'

Doll writes that Lady Gawdy's house has been searched.

'which we took unkindly for we thought we had behaved ourselfes so as not to be suspected. Sene the presbeterians fight against the parliment I will think all things posible for I beleved them inseperable.'

The question in everybody's mind was what part General Monk would take, and when it was known that he was likely to support the Rump, Lambert and the officers at Wallingford House forcibly dissolved Parliament, for the second time, and constituted themselves the sole authority. Oct. 13, 1659.

Dr. Denton writes to his nephew, having received, as he says, 'a Loyne of Caufe Raph. We hope to eat it merrily for your sake. Maugre all alarms & tumults: We are in the posture you left us: the City doth nothinge effective. Fleetwood hath gott the Tower by a trick, & Southampton hath taken itselfe, for whilst the garrison went out to trayne they shutte the gates & soe keepe them out.' Dec. 14, 1659.

The next day a new Constitution was proclaimed by the Council of Officers, and Parliament was to meet in February. Sir Roger writes: 'The comon councell satt yeisterday from 10 in the morning till 6 at night, and the result of all was not very acceptable to the generallity of the Citty; they have not yet according to the petitions settled a militia of their own. What a few daies more may produce God only knowes: God fitt us for the worst of times.' 'Several horses have been taken & when to be restored I am to learn. Lambert is reported to be at Newcastle and his men reduced to some straits, being not supplied according to expectation with shooes & stockins, for if report be true a friggott that was bound for Newcastle with that kind of ware & arms, most unhappily mistook the port & sett in to Leith in Scotland, so that Monk's army have mett with them. Monk they say is at Barwick, a good distance from the other, yet its said that Major Creed had an encounter with a party of Monk's & had not the better of it. Sir H. Vane is return'd and Salloway; severall of Rump, with Lawson [Admiral of the Fleet in the Thames] who for the present declares for a Parl[t]; I suppose the Rump, though some Dec. 15, 1659. Dec. 20, 1659.

doubt it. Sir Arthur Hasilrig & Morley are still at Portsmouth.'

Dec. 21, 1659. Sir Roger writes twice the next day, 'by carrier as well as by Coach,' and tells Sir Ralph of the perplexity and indecision in the City. 'A Common Councill was chose this day & such a one as hath not these many yeares been known for Malignancy.' Sir Nathaniel Hobart's income in the Court of Chancery had fallen considerably owing to 'the troubles of the times'; he had been ill of a pleurisy in the spring, to the great alarm of his family. 'I infinitely long to heare of honest Natticock,' wrote Sir Ralph to Doll, '& to bee assured of his recovery, for a better friend & a better Man is not knoune to me.' Thanks to the Doctor's care he recovered, and Mun wrote to Lady Hobart: 'It is my earnest prayer that Destinye (though she pauzed a while) will never grow wearye of spinning the thred of his well deserved life.'

Nov. 30, 1659. Doll Leeke writes to Sir Ralph: 'I am conserned for my pore brother & sister, for ther condision is ill by reson of these alterasions in stat afairs.' She longs for a visit from him. 'Really I wish it wear all the way carpets to tempt you.'

Dec. 25, 1659. Mr. Butterfield is keeping a melancholy Christmas at Claydon. 'We expect here you should have no great quiet at London, for the souldiers that passed up toward London this last weeke talkt openly of Plundering the city.' John Stewkeley, writing on 'St. Stephen's Day,' is expecting Christmas company every minute; the late tumults in the City have made his brother very solicitous about his London property. Meanwhile, the old Rump showed fresh signs of life. On Monday the 26th the Members reassembled at Whitehall, marched with Speaker and Mace to Westminster Hall, made a House and began upon business.[1] Lambert's army has melted away in the northern snows without waiting for the enemy. 'No Government in the Nation,' wrote Evelyn,

[1] Lines said to be written on the door of the House of Commons:

'Till it be understood
What's under Monk's hood,
The citizens pull in their horns;
Till ten days be out
Old Will has the gout,
And the Parliament sits upon thorns.'

Letter to Lady Russell by 'E. A.' January 20, 1660.

'but the soldiers, & they not agreed. God Almighty have mercy on us, and settle us.' The Restoration was in the air and in all men's minds as a hope or a fear, but as yet in no man's mouth. It is impossible to read these letters of eye-witnesses, giving the changes of opinion day by day, without realising how many various causes were driving men to this solution of England's difficulties.

The new year 1660, Evelyn's 'Annus Mirabilis,' had begun. John Stewkeley writes from Hampshire that 'the Rump is grown very big of late.' 'If any newes of consequence fall in your way that is not printed, it will bee very acceptable here, for Mercurius doth abuse us too often. What the Sword-bearer brought of Monke's coming up, may bee falsly rendered by him, therefore we desire you would undeceave us.' Peg Elmes hears how Monk is 'courted as he comes along on his march to town.' Sir Roger writes on the 26th 'for newes I am much to seek for it . . . the Parl^t hath sett forth a declaration . . . which is very fair and plausible, it affects the Ministry, the Law, Universities, the people's liberties, & many other good things. Monk is, I suppose, what he was, & what that is, a farr wiser man then myself cannot tell; I heare he lay at M^r Pierepoints on Thursday last . . . great confidence is expressed on both sides, if he satisfies both, he will be more lucky then ordinary.'

Jan 18, 1660.

Jan 25, 1660.

Sir Roger writes again, while Monk was pausing at St. Albans: 'on Fryday Monck is expected heere, & most men are tired out with the various prognostications that are made as to his future proceedings. Norfolk & Suffolk have sent up their declarations touchinge another kinde of Parl^t but I heare not of any more clapt up. Was Sir Robert Pye the smile that came from Moncks face, upon that occasion as you mention? I hope so or rather wish that it was the result not of his disdain, but pleasant reception of that proposition made by the Lady.'

Feb. 1, 1660.

Neither Sir Roger nor Sir Ralph could so far forget their old fight against Charles I. in the best days of the Long Parliament as to feel any enthusiasm for promoting the return of Charles II., and they would not swell the crowd that waited

upon Monk at every stage of his progress to London.

Feb. 1, 1660. Margaret Elmes writes to reproach her brother: 'I wonder one soe exsackt in all thinges as your selfe is, should let soe greate a person as Moncke is to pas by soe neare you, without your invitation, or att least your going to complyment him with sum of your Neighbors; I see nothinge can make you stur from your beloved Claydon.'

Feb. 7, 1660. 'Lord Fiennes is gone to Broughton,' writes the Doctor, '& would not sitt because they act on a Commonwealth Bottom. If a free election come & he be chosen, he will sitt, or if this sitts & the Lords called in (of which there is some hopes) then he will sitt as two houses. I can say noe more but that if you are not a member, I misse of my aime.'

Feb. 8, 1660. Sir Roger writes on the 8th: 'Monck was at the house on Munday last who expresst himself so obscurely that most men know not what construction for to make of it': Sir Roger was not in love with the Sphinx. He adds a postscript the next day: 'The Common Council was very stiff yesterday & will not submit to taxes, & would not own the Parl^{t}. Souldiers are gone this morning into the Citty, I suppose to reduce them, they will only make addresses to

Feb. 9, 1660. Monck.' Dr. Denton gives some further details. 'Just now newes is come that Monke & all his Army is marched into the Citty, on the occasion of the Common Council beinge mighty high last night in giving the Warwickshire gentleman great thankes (volens, nolens the L^{d} Maior) promising to live and dy with them. It works apace now.' Monk was ordered by the Council of State to repress by force what was in effect a Royalist pronouncement by the City: he obeyed, and the City was overawed. 'Bristol for certaine,' Dr. Denton continues, 'standes on theire guard & will admitt noe souldiers. They that desired to passe through the other day, were dismounted at the gate leaving their horses & their Armes, & marched 10 & 10 quite through, with 10 & 10 of the city guard betweene each 10 of them; & when quite out of the citty had then delivered to them, theire horses & armes again. There are your men, Sir.'

Monk's attack upon the City nearly wrecked his own reputation as well as its gates and portcullises, but he saw his mistake, and retrieved it in a moment. Dr. Denton tells the story: '13th of February, 12 at night. . . . As soon as Monke had sent the enclosed letter to the house [requiring them to fill up their numbers at once, and to dissolve on the 6th of May to make room for a newly elected Parliament], he presently drew his army into the citty beinge Satterday & complied with the Citizens, which was quickly spread, & uppon which there were bonefires circum circa, & from one end of the city to the other, Westminster etc. & with such joy & acclamation as was never yett seene. The Speaker (who sate late) in his march homewards affronted, his men beaten, his windowes broken. A Rumpe in A chayre rosted at his gates, & bonefires made there. Never so many rumpes rosted as were that night. What this will produce nemo scit. About 12 A clock this day at noone, it was generally beleeved it would prove Ignis fatuus, for that Monke was strongly looked for to dine with some Grandees at White Hall, but did not. . . . If you goe to Twiford tell my Lord he lost such sport by going out of towne that he is never like to see the like.' It was evidently hopeless for Kate to get her doctor away.

The news is running like wildfire through Hampshire, where several private letters have been received. John Stewkeley rejoices that General Monk 'hath declared for a single Person (you may Imagin whom) and for a Free Parliament. . . . We may all soon meet if the Wind blow from Flanders: w^{ch} I pray for, pro Re: pro Ecle. Ang: pro reg: as a Subject, as a member, as an Englishman.' Feb. 14, 1660.

The contrary report prevailed in London two days later. Dr. Denton is 'out of tune.' 'Monke inclines to much to favor an Ingagement for A Republiq without King, single person or house of Lords. . . . The expected writts should issue to-morrow, they will be chosen the old way.'

The streets are full of soldiers. Pen, looking out of the windows of her London lodging, writes: 'I wish Munke may be so happy a Parson to this poore distressed Land, Feb. 15, 1660.

that he may merritt Applause from all parsons, as yett I am not so much taking with him, as to delight my self with aney sight of his men.'

Feb. 16, 1660. Sir Roger sends his version of the reconciliation between Monk and the City and 'of the great joy that was conceived by inconsiderat persons (which were very numerous) by reason of his letter, which they pleased themselves with those constructions their phancies made of it, & no expressions were wanting to it. The bells & fyres fully discovered rather what they would have, then what they had: out of the same mouths proceed blessings & curses, for they who cursed him the day before for pulling down the gates, blesst him this day for coming into them. On Sunday thousands resorted to St. Paul's Church, to get a sight of him. He hath continued there ever since & severall of his forces at the Citty charge, who entertaine them with much seeming contentment. . . . What Monck will do to answer the expectations of all parties, I am to seek—though very many may be deceived, I shall be non of them. . . . Addresses are still made to him, people will not be quiett. Lambert summoned to come in by this day, which if he refuse to doe then to be sequestred. This morning I was told that he was come in, which is contrary to what I heard yesterday. . . There are nothing but riddles asked.'

Feb. 18, 1660. The Doctor writes: 'You may longe to heare of the fruits of the Bonefires, I can only in briefe tell you this, that all sides ply Monke with warm'cloaths & he like a prudent person would fayne reconcile. I heare that he offered the secluded if they would only promise not to bringe in the King, that he did not doubt but to procure their sittinge. Dick Norton told him that Freedom of Parl^{t} was the just right & interest of the nation & if they thought it fitt to bringe in the Turke, they ought not to be imposed on the contrary. Last night 10 & 10 of Rumpers & Secluders met before the Generall; the result of which I cannot yet learne, but I doubt nothinge but wranglinge.'

Feb. 21, 1660. Sir Roger announces the vote which would enable Sir Ralph to take his seat again, after sixteen years of 'seclusion.'

'Sir, without the least preamble to it or giving you an account of what pass't in order to the last and most unexpected turne: you may by this understande that the secluded members, by the assistance of Gen[l] Monck, were readmitted this day into the house in which place he was voted Cap[t] Gen[l] of all the forces of Eng[l] Scot[l] & Ire[l] under the Parl[t], Lawson to continue vice-Admirall.'

Dr. Denton writes the next day: 'Monke brought in the secluded members who act & vote as formally as before, & take noe notice of anythinge. Our Cozen Greenvile hath lost himselfe most wonderfully amongst his countrymen in refusinge to doe as other neighbours did, noe man dissentinge but himselfe. Sir R. Piggott hath done little lesse. Sir R. T[emple] carries it plum on all sides; he writt to Dick Winwood by coach yesterday, he havinge notice over night that it would be. We knewe nothinge till about 9 A clock. I have sent to hasten Dick W. to his duty, they are all earnestly desired. I wish my Lord Wenman were in a condicion to come up.' Feb. 22, 1660.

Penelope rejoices 'above all that by this new & great chang' she has lived to see her brother 'onc more in a Capacitie to sarve the Country.' 'It would vex me to the hart to have us both out,' writes Dr. Denton, eager in the general excitement to add to the duties of his over-busy life; 'but if Cavaliers are to be excluded we shall be mumpt.' There is also a talk of Sir Ralph standing for Westbury, Bedwin, or Malton. He at first fights shy of election expenses, as the parliament is expected to be a very short one.

Kind congratulations pour in. Sir Henry Lee has just heard 'of the great news at London': 'I assure you,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'it is the best wee have had this many years & trewly I am very glad Sir R. Var: entends to serve his Country & friends in that Hon[ble] imployment.' He offers to use his interest on Sir Ralph's behalf, and desires to see him 'at Ditchley, though I confesse it has nothing that deserves an invitation from Cladon, though I can promise no person to be more wellcome then yourselfe.' His mother, Lady Rochester, at once sets her agents to Feb. 23, 1660.

work, and writes to Mr. Thomas Yates to secure seats for Sir Ralph and her son in the elections for what was emphatically called a Free Parliament, though the electors seemed amiably ready to submit to the Countess's dictation, and to acknowledge it as 'their duty to their Country & their younge Lande-Ladyes to serve Sir Ralph therein.'

Lady Rochester lays Mr. Appletree, whom she had been asked to support, 'absolutely aside,' and she will not mind if her 'brother St. John be not chosen' as Sir Ralph 'is a person whose owne merits is such, as it will bee a happinesse to the place, and they will have cause to give us thanks for him; besides his relation to the children's businesse, obleiges me to doe him any service hee shall comand if there should be noe oath imposed nor engagement S^r^ Raphe will accept of it himselfe, and if there should be any reason to divert him, I shall desire it for his sonne. Good M^r^ Yates, next to my sonne Lee, let not S^r^ Raphe Verney faile of being chosen. . . .'

Sir Ralph thinks the election may be managed 'if M^r^ Yates bee quicke & cordiall.' Westbury is to be tried first, and if that fails he is to be put up at Great Bedwin. He is in no hurry to claim his seat in 'Rumpe Major,' but is ready to stand if there is really to be 'a Free Parliament without any oath or engagement.' Mr. Yates makes zealous professions—'if I should be wanting, I should neyther answer it to God, my Country, my Lady Rochester nor you.'

Lady Rochester has her hands full with the property belonging to her first husband's children and grandchildren and the political patronage that went with it. 'Here is such a doe,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'about providing for burgeses place the nex perlement, I have ben soe trobeled with Solicitors, for those places in the children's estate that it has bin very troblesom too mee, but I put them all off with telling them that I am alredy promised as far as my interest goes; I hope that Yates wilbe carefull in securing a place for you & my sonne Lee, & those will bee as many as wee can compas. The towne of Mamsbery sent too my Sonne Lee that if hee would come in person they did hope

March 2, 1660.

too chuse him, though there were at least thirteine that did sue too bee choose in that towne, soe my Sonne meanes too goe thether at the election for feare of the worst.'

Sir Ralph writes to the young man himself, who had 'excused his coming to Claydon': 'I wish your land at Ditchley were as dirty as the Isle of Doggs (& as rich too) and then perhapps you would thinke our Vale habitable.'

The rush for seats in the parliament of 1660 was in marked contrast with the difficulty of getting candidates to stand under Cromwell's rule; the great interest and importance of the crisis was fully understood, and the part the House of Commons was to play in it. Edmund Verney has 'a very greate desire to serve in Parliament. . . . to advance my understanding unto a higher piche, by learning the intrigues of my owne native contry, whereof I am wholly ignorant.' Dr. Hyde encouraged his ambition while advising him to 'expect the qualifications now hamering here. Every day produces such vanitye of Contradictions, it is not possible to write any certaintie as yet. . . . but certeynly I shall never advise you to hazard your Fortune, much lesse your Honour or Conscience for a little improvement of your experience.' Jan. 30, 1660.

Edmund had asked Dr. Hyde to send him some books, but he advises him to wait till he returns to towne, 'then you are sure to please your selfe in the print, volume and edition. To spend this vacation y^r^ Father's studdy or the Parson's will furnish you.' His further counsel would not come amiss to a young member of Parliament of to-day. He considered there was much profit to be derived 'by sitting, learning, observing and voting there.' Edmund doubted his power of taking part in debate, and was conscious of some hesitation and imperfection in his speech. 'I have no English Authors to supply my want of words, but I'le be watchfull least I precipitate myselfe into any discourse, which shall exhaust my treasure of words so farr as to endanger the driving mee to a nonplus.' The lawyer is of opinion that more speakers fail for lack of thoughts than for faults of manner. 'Above all,' he says, 'the Resolution of

deliberating and resolving what to say before you speak, will certeynly furnish you with words as well as matter, especially if you be carefull to speake the sense thoroughly, & avoyd the catch or repetition of the last word or syllable which fell from you. All which Time & Observance of yourselfe will certeynly produce. These things I should not inculcate to you whoe understand them soe well, but that I must find somewhat to fill my paper besides expressions of my strong affection for you.'

Feb. 29, 1660. Dr. Denton writes that it is generally believed the Parliament 'will dissolve this weeke; the sooner the better, for under the Rose I have noe faith in Rumpe Major.'

March 1, 1660. 'Rumpe Maior begins to smell as ranke as Rumpe Minor, I knowe noe man pleased with their proceedings, here are great feares & jealousies that they have a mind to establish themselves, & to re-establish Richard . . . which is all at present, & enough to burne. . . .'

March 1, 1660. Doll Smith, sending for money, writes: 'I sent too barrors becaus I was afrayd to venture one of them alone now the souldiers are about.'

March 8, 1660. 'Yours of 28th Febr. I received not till late last night & that by chance,' writes Dr. Denton. 'The truth is Kate was in fault for she received it, & put it in her pockett and never thought of it till then. The face of things begins to looke a Squint. The officers all day yesterday in great consultation & it is said they will declare high against the militias, A single person, & House of Lords etc. What the issue will be, nemo scit. I shall want a little hay dust to sow the holes in the parsnage yard, I pray let Will gather me a little out of the barne, I beeleeve a peck may serve. . . . The militia of Bucks is passed & I thinke neyther you nor Mun were not put in.' The lists were apparently of men excluded, as the Doctor rejoices that Edmund is now qualified to serve. 'Your son is turned Jockey (which you know I like bravely) beinge on Satterday brought in a Rider for the Militia in to the House.' He adds a week later: 'I wish Mun much ioy of his new office, but he hath pittiful comrades,' and Sir Roger writes on the

23rd: 'The bills for the Militia are passed; & as I understand it Mr Verney's name is amongst the Commissioners.'

March 9, 1660. 'Doctor Owen is like to give up to Doctor Kinnolly as to the Deanerie of Christ Church,' writes Dick Winwood. 'Sir Arthur is summoned to the house to answer some factiousness, Lambert is in the Tower.'

March 8, 1660. 'Lord Allington is dead of the smallpox,' writes the Doctor. 'This day Pryn moved not to dissolve, & for King & Lords with an appeale to the gentlemen of the Longe Robe to answer his arguments. He spake almost an houre. Mr Annesley answered ingeniously confessinge his Arguments were not to be answered yet moved to dissolve. Chief Justice St. John though present spake not one word. He hath definitely lost himselfe by actinge soe like a sollicitour for a Commonwealth, to have a Parliament moulded as in '54, & to have Scotland & Ireland included therein. It is Haver du Poix whether they dissolve, or dissolve not, but most think they must dissolve.'

March 14, 1660. 'They are resolved on my Brother Sherard, both for Knight [of the shire] and the Militia. I beleeve Sir Richard Temple doth hope the gentry will offer it to him, & if they doe I beleeve he will with many acknowledgments & much civility devolve it upon them againe, because he is sure elsewhere, & soe I hope are you except your Dr horse you out, which he longs to doe. . . . If you can gett in I'le looke to your deere & trees & buildinge to, for I love them all though I cannot manage them soe well as you.' Nancy writes her special news on the back of her father's letter. 'Youre furmity had broght forth a very fin keten for you, but by ill fortuin sumthing kiled her ketens & she proved very unnatureall & eat them up which is a gret greve to hir that is your duty full god daughter A. D.'

March 15, 1660. We watch the last dying throes of the Long Parliament. 'The house sat this day in order to a dissolution,' writes Sir Roger, 'but could not reach it, though they did not rise till nine at night . . . tomorrow they will dissolve, so much as in them lies, I longe for the time & for an opportunity of

waiting upon you. . . . Bishop Wren voted out of the Tower.'

March 17, 1660. Sir Roger writes again: 'Sir we are now at liberty though much against some of our wills: after many sad pangs & groanes at last we did expire, and now are in another world. Yesterday morning the bill for presbitery & that for the 20,000*l.* for the generall passed, & by vote he is made steward for Hampton Court & the Parke, & so is at liberty to take the ayre when he pleases. About 6 o'clock we passed the bill of dissolution, with a perfect salvo to the rights & priviledges of the Lord's house after some opposition. Ther wanted not offers or a declaration of a higher nature which was to cleare the house from the guilt of the King's blood; but this being by prudent men thought unnecessary in regard of our revoking & obliterating those votes which put us out of the house grounded upon that vote which was made by us the longe night; so that that vote now stands good, & we think ourselves cleard from anything that followed. However some were pleased to protest & declare against it as an execrable act. Sir, theise were the last passages of that so long lived Parliament, which is not dead before, I question whether it lives not yet . . . though I may be dead as to a politick capacity, yet so longe as I live in any capacity, you may confidently call me & look upon me as, Sir, your faithful humble servant R. B.'

March 22, 1660. 'Since the dissolution we have had but little newes, but that Ireland would fain stand upon its own legges, yet willing to decline a separation from us, what they declare seem to be riddles to me. . . . The Generall & Councell of State were invited to bed & board in to the Citty . . . the first they refused, not apprehending their condition to be so full of dainger as the Citty did, the latter they have accepted, & next Wednesday the Drapers treate them, & Generall Moncks Lady is the very single person of her sex that is courted to it.'

The last show of armed resistance came from Lambert, and he was routed by Tom's old Colonel, Dick Ingoldsby,

a regicide whom the 'turning wheels of vicissitude' had brought round to the Royalist side, though he cheerfully declared that the King would probably cut his head off as soon as he landed.

And now the qualifications for candidates were being keenly discussed all through the country. Doctor writes to Sir Ralph: 'I doe thinke to try my fortune Att Malton. Therefore make sure of Lady Rochester's place if possible, for the house will not be altogeather soe comfortable if we be parted . . . I ghesse your being of the Parliament soe longe after Edge Hill may perhaps lett you in, especially consideringe the temper the next House is like to be of.' March 17, 1660. Sir Ralph becomes more keen about his own election as the time draws nearer; his cautious economy is forgotten. 'As to any matter of charge, I shall readily disburse it,' he writes to Yates; 'those things are not to bee had Drily: you know there is a time to cast away as well as a time to keepe, therefore being a meare stranger to all those persons and places, I must needs intreate you to doe both what & when & how you thinke fit . . . if you thinke it fit for me to doe anything or move in any kinde myselfe, if you beleeve they expect it from me, let me but know it. . . . I confesse I would be very loath to receive a Foyle . . . if they will not chuse me, the lesse I appeare, the better it will bee.' March 11, 1660. Such electioneering would seem easy indeed, to the harassed and hunted candidate of to-day.

Even before the elections Royalists who had lain low were showing signs of life. Robert Leslie, who had an interest in Sir Edmund Verney's patent for hackney coaches, reminds Sir Ralph of it. 'Tis true in Cromwell's time,' writes Sir Ralph, as of something long past and over, 'some rules were made about Hackney Coaches, but unlesse a Parliament settle it, I doubt nothing else can doe it.' Leslie would be loath to beg, he has never done it, but as Sir Ralph has succeeded to his father's fortunes he 'must suckseide to his cindnes for his oulde frend, not onle with a littell mone, but with a gelding fit for a nold man to meete his Majeste on.'

The brother Lady Rochester had been so willing to disappoint was taking his own measures. Mun writes

April 16, 1660. to Dr. Hyde, from Claydon: 'S^r Walter St. Johns and my father are chosen, but theyr election will be disputed, because that two persons more are returned which were put in by my Lord of Hertford. I perceive that I shall not be one of this parliament though if it had pleased my father I might have been elected in 2 places of this county from whence I write unto you.'

The elections proceeded amidst great popular excitement. The Cavaliers, far from being 'mumped,' were elected in large numbers. Dr. Denton writes a long list of their friends who are returned, but, alas! after all the scheming neither he nor Sir Ralph is of the number. Doctor at the last yielded his interest at Malton to 'Phil Howard & M^r Marwood who served in Dick's Parliament a very short session & at theire very great charge, as I heare neare 200*l*.' There was much courteous communication between the candidates, neither wishing to stand in the other's way, but Doctor looks on this as 'noe Parl^t & that it will just call in—etc. if that. It is the next must ratify & act the greater things & he hopes to be of that.'

Lady Rochester's agents are afraid of her displeasure, though they have done their utmost to fulfil her honoured commands. Thomas Baxter has said much at Westbury

March 28, 1660. 'of Sir Ralph's interest & great abilities,' and is 'goeing tomorrow to Bedwin. . . . My Lord Marquis [of Hertford] notwithstanding some application hath beene made on Sir Ralph's behalf . . . useth all the endeavoures that can be possible against us. . . . If you but saw the straing actings, & the straing people we have to deale with, you would admire.'

April 8, 1660. 'In many places,' writes Dr. Hyde to Edmund, 'Secluded Members and Rumpers are equally scorned, and in truth Neither Barrell is better Herring. I could wish you joyned with Sir R. Beryton, or some other thorough paced gentleman: for I have a mind to translate the odious French word into that English one. Let nicknames and

distinctive expressions continue uppon Factionists, Calvinists, and Lutherans & to diversifye Sectaryes: Only the Right Christian is the Catholicke.'

'The violence & rashnes of the King's party disorders & distempers all,' writes the Doctor anxiously. 'The Gallican Ministers have written to ours assuring them that the Kinge is a very good Protestant and much on his behalf'; the pendulum had not ceased to vibrate; Dr. Denton writes: 'Here is great noise of Lambert's beinge at the head of 20 troopes, 3,000 foot, taken Warwick Castle, the country comminge a maine to him, but not a word true. The worst newes is the K.'s interest cooles beyond expectacion, through the indiscretion of his rantinge party as its said, but I beleeve tis through the designe of some others, though they have been foolish enough.'

April 4, 1660.

April 6, 1660.

April 17, 1660.

When the Convention Parliament met on the 25th of April, 1660, England was in a frantic hurry to fetch the exile from over the water, and, as in another great revulsion of popular feeling, the sole question men asked their neighbours seemed to be, 'Why are ye the last to bring the King back to his house?'

The news from London roused the whole country. 'Such universall acclamations of wilde & sober joy I never yet saw,' wrote Mr. Butterfield in the first bright days of May; 'we had our Bonefire too & Bells ringing even at Claydon. . . . Heaven & earth seeme to conspire to make a faire and fruitfull springe of plenty & joy to this poore kingdome; the seasonableness of which mercy now the generall face of Christendom seems to looke peaceable, ads much to our present happines. The fields & pastures begin to put on their best dresse as if it were to entertaine his Majesty in Triumph, & make him in love with his Native soyle. . . . Sure in the Middest of all our rejoycings it wilbe very difficult to satisfy ye Expectations of men and for Majesty to walk so evenly as not to give offence to our formerly dissenting grandees; ye Lord give them all wisdome and moderation.' But misgivings were for the moment drowned in the chorus of jubilation.

An old blind prophet there was indeed, living far above the dust and tumult of the street, who made one passionate appeal after another to Monk, to the parliament, and to the nation. 'By returning of our own foolish accord, nay running into the same bondage, we make vain & viler than dirt,' he said, 'the blood of so many thousand faithful & valiant Englishmen, who left us in this liberty, bought with their lives; losing by a strange after-game of folly all the battles we have won, all the treasure we have spent.' But the men and women in the street, weary of strife and harassing suspense, saw not what the prophet saw from his watch-tower, and gave little heed to his trumpet-blast. 'My head is so testicated with the times, between hope & fear, I know not what I do; if things be not as I hope, my heart will break, I cannot outlive it,' said one anxious woman, 'but I do not despair for I am confident it will be.'[1] 'I pray God send we may live to see peace in our times,' pleaded another, 'and that friends may live to in joye each other.'[2] Such homely words as these explain the Restoration, for London held but one Milton, and the voices in the street were many.

[1] Lady Hobart, March 22, 1660.

[2] Penelope Denton, March 8, 1659.

COTTAGES AT EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE WOOING OF MARY ABELL.

1660-1662.

While England was enduring 'the miseries of a Civil War, and the many and fruitless attempts towards Settlements, upon imaginary Forms of Government,' a Royalist merchant, William Abell, left the City of London, bought the manor of East Claydon, with the White House, and tried to bury himself in the safe obscurity of the life of a country squire. He bore a name which was unpleasantly notorious. William Abell the elder, Master of the Vintners' Company, had been the King's tool in his illegal attempts to tax the City Companies; to escape the gibes and caricatures showered

upon him in London during the Protectorate, he fled to Holland.

Before the troubles, his son had married 'Anne, daughter of John Wakering and Mary Palmer his wife,' of an old family of small landowners, at Kelvedon, in Essex. Their eldest child, Mary Abell, was born there, 'on the 5th of April 1641,' and baptized on the 17th; the next year a son, Thomas, was born on the 18th of May, baptized in Kelvedon Church on the 29th, and buried there on the 30th of August. Anne Abell survived her boy but a few months, 'she dyed 22nd January 1643, and was buried in St. Peter's Church in St. Albans.' The widower settled down on his newly acquired property, and here his little daughter grew up, the pride of the village, and the darling of her quiet home, but far removed from whatever advantages town breeding and good society could bestow.

East Claydon would, however, have repudiated any idea of remoteness or rusticity. Was it not known to all the world that the high-road from London to Buckingham passed through it, and that the London coach stopped to bait at Squire Abell's substantial Village Inn, where a fine wainscoted parlour received the passengers who might wish to taste the excellent home-brewed ale? Plaistow, too, the London carrier, had his abode here; and the Church books showed an admixture of outside influences unknown to the retired parish of Middle Claydon. In 1641 there was quite a sensational entry of the death and burial of Mercy Hawkins, of Greetworth, in the county of Northampton, 'a passenger from London.'[1]

[1] At a time when some half-dozen Christian names sufficed for all the boys and girls, gentle and simple, of the neighbourhood, the variety in East Claydon is quite remarkable. With the Puritan taste for Bible names—Noah, Ezra, Jonas, Josias, Judith, Deborah, Lydia, Susannah and the like, the older names have kept their ground, and Christopher, Michael, Benedict, Agnes, Audrey, Christian (as a girl's name), Constance, Dorothy, Elinor, Ursula, Priscilla, and Petronilla are amongst the names of the village children. The Welsh element, represented by Ellis, Hugh, Pierce, and Winifred, may, perhaps, be traced to the household of the Vicars Owen Gwynn (1583) and Maurice Gryffyth (1624 to 1663).

The White House was then 'a handsome dwelling, with numerous gables, heavy stacks of chimneys, mullioned windows, and piers surmounted with stone balls.' It has now shrunk to smaller proportions, but the upper story overhangs picturesquely, and the beautiful Jacobean porch still remains. The small mullioned bow-window of Mary's parlour, built up in the intervening century, has recently been brought to light. The ornamental brickwork of the garden wall, and the clipped box hedges, retain a respectable flavour of antiquity.

William Abell the widower kept up his friendship with his wife's family, who were usefully connected with the Protector's Government; her brother, Dionysius Wakering, married Anne Everard, daughter of an Essex baronet, and their only surviving child, Mary, married Oliver St. John's son. 'Aunt Wakering,' who appears as a widow during Mary's girlhood, seems to have married again late in life Cromwell's General, Desborough.

While Mary was still a child, William Abell returned to Essex for a wife, another Mary, whose family name has been lost; she was related to the Wakerings through the Wisemans, a connection difficult to trace, as there were three Essex baronets of that name in the time of the Stuarts; the Verneys were related to them through Sir Ralph's wife.[1]

The second Mrs. Abell proved an excellent stepmother, and Mary was tenderly attached to her. Squire Abell's

[1] To complicate matters still further, Mary, the second Mrs. Abell, married a Wiseman after her first husband's death; when standing sponsor to her stepdaughter's child in February 1666, she is described as 'the Lady Wiseman, wife of Sir Richard Wiseman and relict of William Abell'; in September 1667, she writes to her stepdaughter from Woodham-Walter, signing herself 'Mary Fytche,' and the latter replies telling her of the death of Wm. Meade, the Parish Clerk, and others of her acquaintance in East Claydon; Mrs. Fytche is said (November 27, 1667) to be staying at the house of her brother [in law?] Sir Wm. Wiseman, and to be adopting one of her late husband's sons; she seems therefore to have lost two husbands and married a third within seven years.

property adjoined Sir Ralph Verney's, and their dwelling-houses were scarce two miles apart, but with such widely different opinions and antecedents there was some instinctive dislike and rivalry between them. The boundary hedges and ditches afforded the usual subjects of dispute between country neighbours; and when Mr. Abell's cattle and sheep broke through some neglected gap and were promptly put in the pound, Sir Ralph took it that Mr. Abell 'intended to quarrel, and that he must order his affairs accordingly.' Edmund Verney was probably the only young man in the Claydons who knew nothing of the gentle maiden his nearest neighbour.

When the Restoration was imminent, and it became profitable to furbish up the rusty memory of a Royalist ancestor, William Abell emerged from his retirement with an enthusiasm of obsequious loyalty, which the old Bucks squires looked upon as officious and absurd. 'Mr. Abell's Collection for the poore King, and the various aspects and humours seen upon his Majesty's proclayminge' at East Claydon were among the jokes of the county. 'Mr. Abell read the King's letter and declaration to his neighbours after church,' writes Mr. Butterfield, 'and haveing shewed them what a gratious King they had, he moves them to see what they would do for him; and to begin lays downe 9*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* which was his owne proportion of the mounthly taxe, and soe desires the like of them all rich and poore. . . . 25*l.* was gathered, and to Aylesbury he and some other of his Neighbours carryed it, where they would have payed it to the Treasurer, but he would none of it, as haveing no order to receive it; then at the Petty Sessions he sends to the Justices to acquaint them of the money; they made themselves merry at it, but would not take the money. So I heare he has now come up to London it may be to meet his Majesty and acquaint him with his doeings, for he told his neighbours the King should know of their forwardness . . . . Mr. Townshend [Rector of Radclive] told me I should see this would be expected from us all. I laughed at him and made him angry. Sure that man is also strangely trans-

May 21, 1660.

ported with this new change, he talks and preaches and does wondrously.' No Stuart King ever frowned upon a worshipper who offered up the incense of hard cash; and we find William Abell in October, '60, as a Captain of Foot, among the gentlemen of the County of Bucks, named to command the Trained Bands, and advanced in due time to further honours.

Sir Ralph and his son spent that gay summer of 1660 in town; Mun is studying 'the elements of Civil Law, but has reached,' he confesses, 'no great height of knowledge therein.' 'The Merry Monarch' was receiving a welcome frantic in its enthusiasm. Everybody who aspired to be anybody expected office at Court, though there were not nearly places enough to go round. Colonel Henry Verney applied for the post of a gentleman-in-waiting, backed up by 'my Lady Peto, Lady Onion, and Sir Harry Newton.' Edmund desired 'a troop' and a 'red ribbon' of the Bath. 'The King,' he writes, 'intends to be crowned the first Thursday after Candlemasse Day, unlesse the Duke of Glocester's death deferre it . . . but I thinke Princes doe not usually mourn so long.' 'Sir Richard Temple, and a yong ladd of a very greate estate and of my name, one Greville Verney,'[1] are to be among the new knights; 'the way had been only to acquaint my Lord Manchester that such a gentleman had a desire to be knight of the Bath, and to give in his name, which he is obliged to present to the King, who denies no man who will be at the charges.'[2] Edward Fust was made a baronet and the King gave him his picture and 'a silver mounted sword with the 12 Apostles beautifully engraved thereon.' Even Heron, Edmund's servant, 'a good sightly fellow, who writes well and is in all respects fit to serve any gentleman,' is inclined to pick a quarrel with his master, that he may be free to seek 'a place at court,' or at worst as 'a comedian' in one of the reopened

[1] An ancestor of Lord Willoughby de Broke, of Compton Verney.

[2] The expenses are not given in detail, but the following year (June 5, 1662) the fees for Sir William Ayscough's knighthood amounted to 60*l.* 10*s.*: a baronetcy was said to cost 900*l.*

theatres. 'To quit your service to turn Player,' writes Sir Ralph, 'will be for neither of your credits. . . . Players and Fiddlers are treated with ignominy by our lawes, and truly I should be sorry to see him in such debased company.'

Jan. 17, 1661. Dr. Denton alone gets more than he wants. 'A feather in my capp,' he writes, 'a warrant to be sworne in ordinary with a Reserve of my Priority and Seniority, but what to do with it now I have it, I doe not know. I shall make noe hast to be sworne . . . . amonge other Inconveniencies I doubt swearinge may ingage me to ride at the Coronation, and I have noe great mind to squander away 100*l*. . . . Dr. Bate and Dr. Manton have refused theire Deaneries.'

March, 1661. Mun's friend Dr. Thomas Hyde succeeds Dr. Zouch at the Admiralty. More business came upon Sir Ralph than ever; his friends who had served 'the late Usurpers of Government' were much persecuted by 'malitious persons'; there were pardons to be procured, suits pending before the House of Lords, 'and Lords are teadious persons to waite on'; there were threadbare Royalists like 'Mr. Kenelm Digby to be certified as being Loyal and Indigent,' and Sir Ralph, as a Deputy-Lieutenant, was constantly receiving proclamations about the raising of the Militia, the prosecution of 'Anabaptists, Quakers, Fifth Monarchy Men, and other Fanaticks,' and the dispersing of their meetings.

Jan. 18, 1661. There is a long correspondence with Cousin Thomas Stafford about the meeting of the Trained Bands at Winslow, where his son, Captain Edmund Stafford, is to be in command. He has 'my Ld. Leift^t's Commission with some instructions,' but there are only 14 pikes and 'he needs that the Collours, Leading Staffe, Partizans, Halberts, Musketts & Drums should be ready, that he may be in an equipage to march, trayne & exercise his company, according to the moderne discipline of warr.' The County is also raising a 'Volunteer Troop of Horse' to meet at Aylesbury. Sir Wm. Smith 'exceedingly approves the designe' and will send a horse or two; he is unable to appear in person, being

Jan. 30, 1661.

summoned 'by my Lord Treasurer to wait upon him, about some affairs of His Majesty's.'

Sir Ralph was no courtier, but he began to consider whether some of the patents granted to Sir Edmund could be revived, and whether his office of Knight-Marshal might not be fittingly bestowed on his son ; rough drafts of petitions were drawn up in which a good deal was said about his father's heroic death, and his own exile and decimation, which would have touched the Standard Bearer's sense of humour. Charles II., more anxious, as the Royalists complained, to conciliate an opponent than to reward a friend, made Sir Ralph Verney a baronet. Mun speaks of 'this Age of Universall concessions,' and affirms that the 'Revolution hath changed the face of the whole Nation which was heavy and discontented into cheerfulnesse & joy.' 'Mercye soe generally rules the land, that Traytors themselves are preferred to their desires.'

March 16, 1661.

Feb. 11, 1661.

'The happy change that wee have lately had in England, makes us now begin to plant again,' writes Sir Ralph to Monsieur Pappin at Blois, 'in hopes that we, or our children, may reape the frute in peace, under our good & gracious King, whose vertues are more honour to him, then his Crownes, & whose zeal & constancy in religion, are like to make him the Head & Protector of all the Reformed churches in Europe' ; and on the strength of these conclusions Sir Ralph begs his friend to send him a large consignment of vines of the early ripe Auvergnac grape.

The King rode from the Tower to Whitehall the day before his Coronation ; Lady Newton's sister Anne Murray, a devout Royalist lady who had known him from boyhood, watched his progress with breathless interest, imputing to him the pious thoughts that filled her own mind. Sir Ralph and Mun witnessed the Coronation in Westminster Abbey. Dr. Morley, whom we last met poking about the old bookstalls at the Hague, bemoaning the triumphs of anarchy and schism, was now preaching the Coronation sermon in full canonicals as Bishop of Worcester ; poor starved Dr. Cosins had become Prince Bishop of Durham ; and Sir Frederick

April 23, 1661.

Cornwallis, who shared Sir Ralph's imprisonment at Whitehall, was conspicuous as Treasurer of the Household. While in so splendid a scene old friends met again, there seemed in the excitement of the moment no room for any feelings but those of mutual congratulation. 'Did I not know you very well,' writes Sir Ralph to Doll, 'I should think you little less than a Phanaticke, for being absent at this great solemnitie.' 'No pen nor ink can express the gallantry of the nobility,' writes another eye-witness, 'who are today in their Parliament robes, I would have enlarged but we are so busie with looking att bonfiers and fireworkes.' [1]

Luce Sheppard is now installed at Burleigh, where 'the littell ladie thrives well under her tuition'; my Lord of Exeter has a dispensation from his Majesty, which relieves him of attendance at the Coronation, much to Luce's disappointment. Mun's account of it to his old friend is more affectionate than instructive. 'Had your affairs allowed me the happiness of Personall attendance on you at the coronation, the joy of the day had been mightilye improved. The solemnitye and lustre thereof you have seene from a pen more certeyne and polite than myne can bee; yet I must say againe, I missed you there.'

'Sweet Cossen,' writes Doll Leeke, 'I beleve you came to towne to se all the bravery, and truly by the relation of it, it was worth your time. . . . I se you have don better for your sonn, then he was abell to do for him self, he is no knight of the Bath, which he did not question to get, but you have given him somthing which will advantag his family for ever. . . . You se I am not to be temted with fine sights to come to Loundon; the truth is I spent all my mouney when I was ther, and must take a longer time to recrut. All that bravery wold have made me malincoly, I am much finer in my ould clothes in the Country, then I should have been ther. Your coronation sute will serve us, ther fore pray come to Croshall.' 'Loundon I am not like to see a long time, for travaling alone is both chargable and unhansom for a woman.'

[1] Fleming MSS. 442, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*

Sir Ralph claims 20*l.* from his son 'for killing my Black bald Nagg; with much difficulty hee came home, but in such a case as . . . never poore beast was worse. There fell a humour into his hinder legg, which swelled it as bigg as your Wast, and in a short time it gangren'd, and became cold and Rotten, soe he is now devided amongst my Carpes.' Edmund denies that he had over-ridden the nag, 'mais la pauvre beste N'avoit gueres envie de marcher, et certes je ne le pouvois blamer, car sans doute il cognoissoit par clarté de Nature, que chasque pas qu'il alloit (quoyque fort petit) le hastoit aux Ombres eternels.' Sir Ralph has 'lost his stomach a little,' and takes to ship biscuit for breakfast. April 29, 1661.

Meanwhile the heiress-hunting for Mun continues. After Mary Eure's final rejection, Mun himself had relapsed into indifference. Sir Ralph and Aunt Isham were still in pursuit of 'Mr. Bacchus' daughter, and heiress, who re-appears as 'the widow of a Mr. Bishop.' Anne Hobart had her own widow to recommend, Sir Edward Alstone's daughter, who had just thrown Lord Paget over, and was in treaty against her father's wishes with 'the son of Lord Coleraine.' Sir Edward Alstone, who preferred the Verney alliance, was conferring with Dr. Denton, and so the dreary comedy dragged on.

My Lord Sandwich's fleet was starting for Lisbon, and Edmund writes: 'J'ai grandissime envie d'aller en Portugall pour faire part du train de nostre Reyne qui sera.' 'As for your Portugal voyage,' Sir Ralph replies, 'I looke uppon it as a Fantasticall Dreame. Can you bee soe sencelesse as to thinke that Portugall is your way to Wooe the Widdow? Beeleeve me Mun, the Widdow must bee your Quene, and tis well if you can get her with all the freindes and industry you have.' May 11, 1661.

Doll Leeke contributes her mite of evidence as to the good impression Catherine of Braganza made on her arrival. 'My sister says the queen is very hansom, and I hear very stricte in hir carage, and all that is with hir modest and reserved. I hope it will work upon some of our wild ladys to make them more grave.' Her portrait at Claydon does May 21, 1662.

not bear out Anne Hobart's charitable opinion of the Queen's good looks. Her expression is sensible and gentle, but the features are heavy and commonplace.

Edmund's own love-making did not prosper; his Widow is 'in a cooling condition,' and his 'late letters have seemed much unconcerned, and rather doubtfull then hopefull of it.' 'God's Will bee donne,' writes Sir Ralph, with a piety which seems quaintly out of place. The Widow finally threw him over in favour of 'a lord'; and the rejected suitor joined his father at Claydon.

The country was in its full summer beauty; Sir Ralph, delighted to be at home again, and weary of the wiles of fashionable dames, might well turn his thoughts towards the little Perdita amongst the sheep-folds of East Claydon. He made some inquiries as to whether she would be Mr. Abell's sole heir; 'her father's brother,' Mun writes, 'is a very cunning littigious fellow, who meaneth to try for it; yet Sir Robert Wiseman, a civilian of the Commons, and uncle to the mother-in-law [stepmother] of the young Lady, was imployed towards the cutting off of the intayle, which was done accordingly by Sir Orlando Bridgeman.'

Squire Abell was High Sheriff that year, but the flutter of pride and excitement which had been felt in the household at East Claydon, when he rode off with much pomp and circumstance to Buckingham, was quickly changed to sorrow; he died suddenly while performing his duty at the Assizes. The sympathy evoked in the county by this sad event brought his family into notice, and the rustic maiden became known outside the village limits as the owner of the picturesque old Manor-house and of the comfortable estate that went with it.

Mr. Maurice Gryffyth had been Vicar of East Claydon for nearly forty years, and was then too old to be entrusted with any delicate negotiations; but Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to pay a visit of condolence on his account, and to put in a word as occasion served about a possible marriage-treaty. It was but five days after the High Sheriff's death that the Rector of Middle Claydon reported

to Sir Ralph: 'I found the gentlewoman under such a cloud of sorrow and reservedness, that I could not without some difficulty fasten any discourse upon her, being never alone yet alwaies as it were alone and silent. When I tooke my leave I gave her a briefe touch of what I desired to have spoken more at large, if my modesty and her reservedness could have contrived it; yet what I sayd I heard from one of her confidents, (for from herselfe I received so low and still an answer that I could not tell what to judge of it) she tooke very kindly. I have been twice there since . . . she professes much respect to you, and sayth after she hath advised with her friends and the young Woman's she will make a more satisfactory returne, but would not by any meanes the young woman should be spoken to till she had first broken it to her. She wants not suters and those of good quality . . . she wants not wit, though she may breeding, and for ought I can learne is resolved to marry where she thinks she may live happy, and if there be a likeing between the young folke it may be a Match. . . . Richard Abell hath been here and is gone again; he would feigne have gotten the young woman to live with him and rely on him, but she absolutely refuses . . . they are as shye of him as of a beare. There is with them now Doctor Sir Robert Wiseman, a grave discreet gent; and one Mr. Gale is sent for,' brother-in-law to William Abell. Aug. 15, 1661.

Edmund was 'a-courting' in September, when Sir Ralph, with little consideration for the new Mary's hopes, invited the old Mary to Claydon; but Mrs. Sherard declined to complicate the situation. 'I here your son is towardes a good fortewen,' she writes, 'I wish him all happiness, and by that account I have of her both for her fortewn and person, shee is very considorabull, soe I hope ther will be noe Stope of it.'

Edmund writes to Dr. Hyde: 'I persist still in my sute to Mrs. Mary Abel, who tells me she will be much ruled by her uncle in law Gale, a proctor in Drs. Commons, to whom I presume you are no stranger; therefore I beseech you, if it Oct. 7, 1661.

be in your power, so to season this Gale that he may not blow any unprosperous wind towards me touching this affaire, yet I beleive I shall cast so sure an anchor that my affaire will not wrecke should he endeavour it. You may assure him that my estate in reversion is 3,000*l.* a yeare (my Father's debt only excepted, which you need not take notice off) so that my fortune is answerable to hers. Then we are the most convenient matches in England one to the other, because the best part of our estates joyne.'

Nov. 15, 1661. Sir Ralph asked Mr. Butterfield to talk over matters again with Mrs. Abell; he was not desirous that Mary should make too generous a settlement on her stepmother, while he felt all the delicacy of interfering. The Rector writes:

Nov. 16, 1661. 'Sir, I have beene all this day from 11 of the clocke to foure this afternoone, at East Claydon; where I found them wondrous kinde and free both in their discourse and entertainment. . . . They do so openly and with so much affection own the Match with Mr. Verney, that except it were really done, I do not see how they could doe more. Stephen Choke sayes Mr. Verney will have as good a dispositiond gentlewoman as can be. Mrs. Goffe sayes they want Mr. Verney extremely, especially one of them. Mrs. Wiseman sayes she is resolved to marry him. I told them you had been like to have been robbed going up. The young woman coloured at it and seemed to be much concerned for it, and expressed a great deal of satisfaction for your escape. I told it on purpose, how true I know not, but had the relation from Will Lea. She weares the ring Mr. Verney gave her openly, and both speakes of him with much pleasingnes, and seemes to delight to heare of him. Truly, Sir, my thought there appeared in all they did and sayd, such innocent and hearty intentions as to the busines desired, that I could not in discretion presse any thing more than what easily dropt from them.'

'I received yours last Sunday dinner,' he writes the next day, 'and after evening service I carryed the inclosed from Mr. Gale to his Niece. She went up into her chamber to read it, and after a while came downe. I perceived by them they expected a letter from Mr. Verney. When she was sate I

asked her if there was any rub in the busines. She sayd no, but that her uncle had sent for a perticular, which she wondered att, and the mother sayd she had told you the truth of the estate, and she thought you knew it as well as they themselves. I told them . . . that Mr. Gale . . . overvalued her estate and undervalued his. Mrs. Abell replyed she had heard him undervalue your estate, but she thought he had known theires better. Then the young woman sayd . . . she was confident her rents would hold at Claydon, so upon that we had some discourse in reference to yours, which they heard were high. But I satisfyed them that all your old inclosure was old rents; and for the new it was so upon improvement, that if it were hard rented now, in seven yeares it would be good.'

Mr. Butterfield said much about 'Mr. Verney's frugality' and that it would be 'no inconvenience to have such a father in law. . . . Night came on, and we parted faire.'

The negotiations were complicated and tedious; not only were Mary's relations anxious to make the best bargain they could for the orphan heiress, but Edmund, behind Sir Ralph's back, was urging Mr. Gale to stand out in Mary's name for a larger present maintenance than his father was disposed to allow him. He begs Mr. Gale to answer his letters privately 'within a cover directed to my Mistress.' Dr. Thomas Hyde is now alluded to as 'my deare deceased friende.'

'I pray God you may deserve all,' writes the Rector to Mun. 'I have promised very faire for you. Should you not make my words good, I should not hereafter see her face without shame and sorrow. . . . I am sure I left her in a very good mode. I am, Sir, your officious friend and servant.'

While Mun's courtship stumbles at the settlements, there is another maiden who feels herself worse used than Mary Abell, a backward suitor being preferable in her opinion to none at all. Betty Verney, who, 'wherever she hath been, hath never yet been pleased,' was in 1660 'destitute of a habitation.' John Stewkeley has 'said so much,' that Cary with 'her train of babs' can no longer offer her a home. Betty is deeply in debt, 'beggarly in clothes,' 'physick keeps

her very bare,' and she is exposed to 'all the miseries that attend poverty and quality in conjunction.' Sir Ralph sends her to a Mrs. Henderson at Goring, who with her husband keeps—like Mrs. Barbauld—a school for young gentlemen; 'noe ill shelter,' Sir Ralph considers, 'till another can be found.' Betty allows that 'the Dr. and his Wife receved her veri kiendley,' 'but I am confident,' she writes, 'if you ware heare, you would not thinck this plas as fit for me as I thinck you doo, how ever I shal indever to stay tel it plesies God and you to reles me out of it.' Her real grievance was that her brother had failed to provide her with a husband. Her godmother, Mrs. Isham, in her hazy good nature, feels sure that 'a Mr. Blagrave,' whose family commands the Parliamentary seat at Reading, would be quite ready to marry her, but as he had wedded a Miss Brown 'a month since,' unknown to his elder brother, it was only dear Aunt Isham's sanguine temper that found an opening here. As Betty puts it to Sir Ralph—'I thinck my marriing veri unlickley in any plas, and imposibil in this . . . but I desier to be holey ruled by you.'

Jan. 17, 1662.

She had set her heart on living with her brother in London, but he cannot take in a maid, and she cannot 'Dresse her Head' herself. Sir Ralph, regardless of the fact that his own wigs required very skilled attendance, makes light of difficulties with which he has never had to grapple. 'I am sori you thinck that to be so esei, which I find so hard,' writes the aggrieved damsel. 'At London, as you order matters,' he replies, 'there's noe hopes of paying your debts. . . . London is a Theife will trick your purse as well as mine.' To this Betty 'ackknoliges' that she has not a word to say. Three months later her hair still remains intractable. 'As for the dresiong my head myselfe, I must deale injenoiosley with you; I can not yet doo it; I am confident goeing to plow would not mack me mor sick than the reaching up of my armes does.'

April 19, 1662.

Mrs. Henderson resolves at the end of May 'to tack no more borders,' 'the Dr. sais he will live with onley his privat famley,' so they request Betty to dispose of herself by Mid-

summer. 'The dressing of your head puts off severall persons from entertaining you,' says Sir Ralph. 'Write me word the utmost you can give and what attendance you doe expect for soe much money.' Betty can afford but '30*l.* A yere for all things, besides fireing and woshing,' she 'must goe very menely' and doubts she 'will not hould out at that nether'; but she has heard 'from A genteil woman of my acquientans to let me know if I pleased I mit live at hur ffathers, and she and I should be chamber feloes, herr name is Frances Boltton, and she lives in Broad Street at the eind towards Threadnedle Street.' Lady Hobart recommends the Charter House, where Lady Lovet and many others are; 'she may be drest and have a roome to herselfe for 30*l.* a yere.' The arrangement with the 'genteil woman' is, however, preferred.

The poor little heiress at East Claydon is still writing sadly to her uncle in Sermon Lane about the 'tedious and odious delayes' in the marriage settlement, when Mr. Butterfield gives Edmund a pretty account of his visit to the old Manor-house. 'I found Mrs. Mary in her morning dresse, a white and blacke petty Coate and wast coate, and all cleane and fine linnen, so lovely proper and briske, I protest I knew her not at first sight. . . . They made themselves merry at Valentine's day in drawing Valentines, and very unwilling she was to be brought to draw (6 or 7 papires being put together rolled up) for feare she should not draw you. But being perswaded to it at last she ventured, and they say very fairely happened on you to her great satisfaction . . . I cannot but adde, had I gained her, as you have done, I would marry her, if she would have mee, though I beg'd; and thinke to see more happy dayes in such a choyce, than in another with thousands per an.' Edmund wrote warmly enough though not often. 'My dearest Mistrisse, If I had no other errant yet I ought to go a Pilgrim on foote to East Claydon, only to kisse that deare and pleasant hand, which so lovingly writ her self, most affectionatly faythfull till death unto me her slave, who must shortly make a journey of devotion to my saint there,

Feb. 24, 1662.

May 1, 1662.

even to my most passionately beloved Mistrisse Mary Abell &c. &c. . . .' Again, 'Yesterday I returned from Gravesend, where I parted with my poore brother, who is gone for Aleppo, and desired me to present his humble service unto you, wishing both you and me all happinesse in the enjoyment of each other whereat I say Amen. . . . Madam I hope all may be agreed twixt Mr. Gaell and my father before my going downe to wayte upon you; and conduct you hither, which I am resolved shall bee next weeke at farthest.' This visit to London gave Mary something definite to talk about when her mother and aunt complained of Mun's neglect. She could not but feel that it was not thus that other maidens were wooed and won. Squire Duncombe's courting of 'Joseph Busbye's daughter had greatly pleased' the elder ladies. *He* could not bear to be parted from his mistress for an hour; her family must be ever at his house, or he at theirs; he had been the last week at Addington; 'always drunk,' alas, 'but if he could have had a priest, they say, he would needs have been marryed at midnight, in spight of all his friends, and away he is gone home with her again.' It was certainly disappointing to hear ten days later, that 'Squire Duncombe was quite off of his hot matching, and would venture her being sicke for love of him'; but need true love be as cool and reasonable as Edmund's was?

Mr. Butterfield was confounded. All his previous experience had been of Edmund's hot-headed eagerness: no diligence and zeal on his own part could ever overtake the suitor's impatience. Night and day Mun was writing love-letters, which Mary Eure cared neither to read nor to answer. Mary Abell blushed with expectation, and grew pale with disappointment when the Rector's budget from Covent Garden contained no word for her. *Then* every member of the family had been tormented, and every conceivable influence set to work, to induce Mary Eure to grant Edmund an interview; *now* when the heart of Mary Abell had yielded almost before the siege was laid, he scarce took the trouble of coming to claim the gracious

welcome that awaited him. 'She weares his picture openly and confidently,' writes the anxious Rector. 'Mr. Verney does very ill in my minde to breake his word thus with the ladyes here at not coming down at the time prefixed, whose impatience in being thus kept from towne . . . is very manifest.' When the truant came at last, he scolded, argued, and explained, but failed to satisfy them. Mary herself was provoked out of her usual patient silence, and Edmund wrote in considerable irritation to Sir Ralph about his evening at the White House. It seemed doubtful whether the long-promised expedition would prove very enjoyable, but Edmund hired a coach and made what haste he could to 'carry his women' to town. April 28, 1662. May 11, 1662.

Mr. Butterfield writes to him: 'no saint but the Virgin Mary can make you happy, sure you take more state upon you then Majesty it selfe.' Small-pox is rife, and he trembles for his little friend 'in that ugly London this hot season.' . . . 'Make hast downe into the country,' he writes, 'that is now very sweet . . . but be sure before you come join the two Claydons together or 'twill never be halfe so pleasant to you. My humble respects to your deare Lady, the maker or marrer of your wealth.' June 9, 1662.

A week later Mr. Butterfield's anxiety reached its climax 'It was first the private whispers of some, but now 'tis Town and country talke,' he writes to Sir Ralph, 'that the match will not be; . . . I wish with my heart it had never been thus carryed on. . . . 'Tis admirable to mee, that wise men should stand so peremptorily upon such inconsiderable nicetyes (for so they will seeme to plainer judgments) to the ruine of your credits and fortunes. . . . Why will you destroy your family, and render all the cost and paines you have been at in beautifying Claydon fruitles? . . . You may see my heart is full, but it runs over so strangely. I must have one fling at him too, and then I have done.' June 16, 1662.

Here follows the 'fling.' 'Mr. Verney, I cannot forbeare writeing. I had much adoe to forbeare comeing to you . . . Sir if your father and you had studyed to make yourselves the talke of the Country, the game and sport of those

that do not love you, and a grief to your friends, you could not have found out such another way . . . If you could be careles of your selfe, yet consider you have gained the affection of an honest gentlewoman, whom if you should wrong by an inconsiderate breach, you will never be able to answer it while you breath, and looke to it, never any prosper that are guilty of treachery in that kinde . . . Sir, I write this out of the bitterness of my heart, and out of an honest desire to be instrumentall to your good, not out of any busy humour to be medling in other men's matters . . . I am concerned in your welfare more than ordinary, and it vexes my very soul to heare how the base bumpkins triumph in the disappointment of this long expected Match, because forsooth now East Claydon shall not be inclosed, though that be the lest of those things that trouble mee for you in this affaire. Sir, excuse my zeale for you; I hope 'tis needles; put mee out of doubt by a comfortable word or two, or els I shall dy with melancholy. My respects to your good lady.'

Happily Mr. Butterfield's fears had overshot the mark; while village gossips were still chuckling over the supposed scandal, the news reached Claydon that the marriage had taken place on the 1st of July, in Henry VII.'s chapel, Westminster. The presence of one relation was certainly dispensed with. Tom had been more than usually tragic, only desiring 'a sleepy potion' to put an end to life and its miseries; but he has now a more genteel grievance. 'I was not of an alliance neere enough to be invited to the marriage feast, yet I hope I shall be thought worthy to wear a brideall favour, not such as was bestowed on coachmen or lacqueys, but such an one as was bestowed on him whose equall I am in every respect. . . . This by the way ffor my discours is of another matter and of farr greater concernement to mee then a wedding favour.' We can easily supply the rest!

The young couple spent three or four weeks in London and seem to have been very happy together. Sir Ralph writes from Chancery Lane, 'My Lady Hobart will be at home all this day, and Sir Nathaniell desires to heare your

July 8, 1662.

Trumpet [Mun has added another instrument to his lute and theorboe], either this evening between 6 and 7, or to-morrow . . . therefore endeavour to get your Master hether.' Edmund writes to Mr. Gale: 'Owning as well for my Deare Mall as for my selfe . . . the courtesies done to us by you before, as well as since our marriage . . . And truly my selfe and second selfe would wayte upon you, your sonne and daughter . . . but that our neighbours in Buckinghamshire would think and say we went only to avoyde them, if wee did not goe directly from hence to Claydon, a purpose to entertayne all that come to see us.' July 16, 1662.

To Sir Ralph he laments the expenses he must incur 'dans cette ville devorante.' Besides spending 43*s.* for his wife's wadded cloak, he pays as much for her silk mantle; 'one pound for my pocket money; Wife 10 shillings; gloves 8 shillings and sixpence; and for coache hire these 2 dayes 10 shillings. For a Carman sent for and disappointed 6*d.*: Paid at a play for 8 maides in the 18*d.* places, 12*s.*: for their Extraordinaryes 6*d.*' 'Mr. Verney's frugality' had never existed except in good Mr. Butterfield's brain, and this was not the moment to call it into existence; indeed the cost of marrying an heiress is feelingly alluded to in the literature of the period. 'When the Bills of Wooing, Wedding, and Honey-Year are defraid, the Baste I doubt proves more than the Roast.' July 24, 1662.

But all else went well, the widow had become 'my Mother' in Edmund's letters, and 'Sister Abell' in Sir Ralph's; great preparations were going on at Claydon to welcome the bride and to introduce her handsomely to the whole Verney connection. The widower-host's establishment was in the greatest commotion, no expense was to be spared to do them honour. Luce Sheppard looked out the best markets in town for fish and foreign fruits. Sir Ralph's extravagance in this respect had often been the subject of expostulations from the Doctor; 'You are a noble gent. but a simple fellow, and doe not consider that 6*d.* a peece for lemons and Nobbs Brocadge doe not agree, and will not hold out, eat your sawce with veniger and lett lemons

Sept. 10, 1662. alone.' Luce had, however, succeeded in getting 'a dosin of lemonds att an exelent cheap rate . . . they cost but 3 shillings the dosen beside portage unwasht, if there be any truth in man, and lickly to be Dearer. Orenges are the worst at 12 pence apeece.' 'The sturgeon promiseth faire . . . in caes it want pickell, 'tis to be covered with beare viniger, the lowest price that the fishmonger alowed the kegg for was 15*s*. . . . the oysters att 2*s*.' The cellar was stocked with Rhenish wine, claret, and canary. The new housekeeper had to provide an impossible number of beds; the coach and horses were needed in opposite directions at once. 'Company I beleave you want not,' wrote Sister Pegg, 'how you will lodg all I cannot imaien.' Sir Ralph writes that Sister Pen must positively defer her arrival, till

Sept. 15, 1662. 'Sir Nathaniel Hobart returnes to London (which will bee very suddenly), for now my sister Gardner takes upp the Parlour chamber, Sister Elmes the Oreng, Coz. Leeke the Lying-in chamber, and Sir Nath. Hobart and his Lady are to Have the old Drawing Roome; and the truth is I expect both Sir Thomas Bird and Sir Roger Burgoyne and his brother every day, and then they must lodg in the Gallery chamber, and I beleeve my Cozen Mun Hobart will bee heere on Satterday next, soe that I am forced to set upp a Bed for my Aunt Isham in the little drawing roome. . . . I have neither Roome, nor bedding left for any body, noe not for a servant, though I have already Borrowed, and must get Sister Elmes and coz. Leeke to lodg together, and made all other shifts that possibly I can. Neither can I send my coach on Tuesday to Alisbery, for that very day I am engaged to meete the deputy Leiftenants of this quarter at a Muster at Buckingham, and after that at Stoney Stratford . . . wherfore I must needes intreate you to deferre your jorney hether.' Penelope had her own reasons for leaving home immediately. 'If weeping in my Lodgins and in the Street by day and by night, would break my heart, in earnest it ware happy for me . . . Mr. Denton has bin so outragious with me, that he has run after me with his Knif in his hand, and vowed to Stob me; God mak me thankfull

I clapt a dore upon me, and my maid turn'd the Kaye, so there I remained in the roome till his great fury was over. . . . He did till me that he should never be att rest till he had washed his hands in my blod.' 'Good Brother,' she continues, 'if your Letter had com time enough to my hands befor that I was in the coch, it had put a stop to my Journey, for God knows my hart. I entended you no trouble, but did belive that I might croud in amoung the reast of the companey.' Her husband joined her later, but at Claydon he was always on his best behaviour. An elaborate practical joke was devised against him by the wedding party. A letter reached him purporting to come from Gape, the apothecary, of which a copy is labelled, lest posterity should misread it, 'A Sham Letter to John Denton that is Crackt.'

'Good Squire, I am given to understand by some freinds att Court, that your Mother is labouring with all the power and might shee can, to make your youngest brother William 'a Lord, and hath soe farre prevaild that shee hath gott a promise of it from his Majesty, which my Lady Studdall, your kinswoman, understandinge and being much concerned in the injury don to you thereby, hath prevailed soe farre by the interest she hath at Court as to put a stoppe to it, and if you will part with 500*l.* you shall have the honour your selfe and not your brother. Now truely if you will take my opinion, I would have you to doe it, for when your brother shalbee sensible of the disgrace that will here by bee put upon him, undoubtedly hee will hang himselfe, and when your Mother knowes that, then shee will presently bee mad, and soe you being Eldest sonne the Law will cast the Estate upon you, and then you may begge her for a Lunaticke, and have the keeping of her your selfe, and soe may bee revenged of all the injuryes shee hath don you. Indeede you are mightyly beholding to my Lady Studdall, for shee hath not onely spoke to the King for you, but to both the Queenes, the Duke of Yorke and the Dutchesse, and there is not a Lord of the privie Councell but shee hath made them your freinds. The King is much taken with the Comendations that my Lady Studdall hath given of you, and hath

comanded that you waite upon him as soone as you come to London. And it is generally belived that you wilbee one of the Lords of the privie Councell, and that will bring you in a Thousand pounds a yeare of it selfe; besides if you can by your wisdome be but as great a favourite as my Lord Chancellor is, you are made for ever. And I hope when you are in power you will not forgett your freinds, etc., etc. You see what hast you neede make to London . . . I have sent the messinger on purpose and therefore I pray you pay him.' Of the 'jest's prosperity' we hear nothing. The good apothecary himself has been 'choused by Sir Wm. Berkeley,' who has given him the slip and embarked for Virginia, in Gape's debt.

Another merry letter was concocted by Aunt Isham and signed by the ladies to induce their host to join them at a picnic. 'Sir, you beinge one of his Magistes Debity Leve tennants, you may be pleased to take noties that too morroe aboute 10 a cloke there is a meetinge att Jhon Rose's House neere Runts Woods. The desine is too devower all as comes before them, as Egges, Baken and ale. For the sagane [sacking?] of your woode itt is thought fite as you a Peare in your Passone for who knowes whate these Extravant Pople may doe in thare Ale, whene thay be hie-flone: so you are too sett all other consarnements a side too doe your utmost endevore to keepe in good order the Passons which intend too asemble them togeather.'

Betty Verney was not included in the wedding party, and got up 'a stolen matching' of her own, on purpose, so the sisters assured him, to revenge herself upon Sir Ralph. In October she had pronounced her health to be such that she was not long for this world—the next news is from Mun.

Nov. 1, 1662. 'Il est bruitté que ma Tante Isabeau a dessein de se perdre sur un pauvre curé: car je vis ces mots deshonorables escrits par Madame Tipping à ma Tante Isham.' There is a chorus of indignation in the family, and Peg Elmes writes

Nov. 20, 1662. in great wrath to Sir Ralph, 'I assure you, you are not a loane in the sensur of my sister Betty's casting a way of herselfe, for now they bringe me very deepely in too . . .

Sumtimes I am a weary of hearing it, how she was cast of, and forsaken, and left to herselfe, noe cowntinance showd her, nor care taken of her, but sent to a parson's house, to a scoole, like a babie. But as I heare the buesines, this might a fallen out any wheare, for the man as I am tolde, lived not theare, but by acsident preached in that church, and theare fell in love with her, which for allt I know, him or sich a nother might a dun heare, if she wolde be soe simple to harken to sich a thinge. Now all are for your getting of him a liveing, which sum say you may doe of Sir Richard Piggot, and that is Grendon Parsonage, and your one whenever Mr. Butterfield dies. Soe now you are put in mind of it time enufgh.' Old Aunt Ursula, who never lost an opportunity of reflecting on Sir Ralph, loudly declared that though Betty was a fool the blame was his.

Cary considers that Betty's 'high discontents was the caus of this rash ackt of casting herselfe away, nether is shee so much to bee condemned as many others. Lett us remember the Earl of Linsis's sister who married Dr. Huit, which was bot a chapling and was as destitut of preferment when her marriage was knone, as this man is, and Sir William Russels dauftar, and to goe nearer homb, my cossin Townsend. And 2 of these had grat fortuns, and the third enough to subsist—sartainly did upon them—and yet none of thies utterly cast of by ther frinds, the rather sopported, and her case much more excusabill then theirs; for we have often red of men as have past for wise and pious both, yet the feare of want hath so far trans ported them, that they have lade A side not only reson bot religion and destroyed themselves, and I have often hard her say, that was her fear, whenever you failled, and truly souch thowts cause soul-sicknes.'

This impetuous bride of nine-and-twenty gave her relations no chance 'to come up for her wedding'; indeed Peg had previously informed Sir Ralph how on the first rumour of the 'maridg' she had sought her sister for four hours in the City, 'and att the last mett with one as I knew she went out of her lodgen with, which in my disscourse

with him, I fowned to fallter much in ansering the questions I put to him but att the last I threttned high if he did not bringe her out, or let me know wheare she was, I wolde come with that as should make him doe it, to them of higher power.' After these ambiguous threats had been launched at the head of the young bridegroom, he hastily retreated, undertaking that Betty should call on her sister that afternoon; 'accordingly she came allthough too lait, for she maryed the Thursday after she came to town.' There is a letter from Betty full of abject apologies 'for this great folt of mine which I should bee willing to Ack Knolig upon my knees ware I in presans too doo it,' but her new signature writ large at the bottom of the page reminds her brother that the great fault can never be undone, and she plucks up spirit enough to assert that 'I am not so much lost, as sum thinck I am, beecos I have maried one, as has the reput of an oneist man, and one, as in time I may live comfortably with.'

Nov. 21, 1662.

Even such a modest amount of domestic happiness seemed far out of reach, though Mr. Adams had one or two narrow escapes; 'I was within 24 hours of a parsonage in Cheshire for your new Brother, of £120 per annum, but it is gone,' writes Dr. Denton; 'we must look about us for some perferment for him.' The broad, kindly, and wholly commonplace face of Charles Adams looks out of its black frame at Claydon, without a redeeming feature to suggest the romantic instinct that prompted his runaway marriage at the age of 24. He became 'Clerk of great Baddow in Essex,' and a highly respected member of the family circle, but meanwhile it was a standing joke with the sisters when they wished to torment their busy elder brother, that they would call upon him in the morning, and talk about Betty!

And so while poor Adam and Eve without a garden, as Dr. Denton called them, met with nothing but reproaches and hard fare, Edmund and Mary were being feasted and honoured at Claydon. Good Mr. Butterfield saw the country damsel he had so gallantly championed the central figure of the family rejoicings; the square pew so long abandoned to moths and

spiders was filled to overflowing; the Rector himself, in the glory of a new surplice for which Sir Ralph had supplied 'the cloth,' beamed down upon them all with unmixed

INTERIOR OF MIDDLE CLAYDON CHURCH

(From a sketch by F. P. Lady Verney)

satisfaction. Dame Margaret and Dame Mary from their niches in the chancel looked kindly upon the girl who was to carry on their work at Claydon, and take the woman's place in the empty house. A few weeks of the intimacy and

confidence of married life had changed her careless lover into a devoted husband, and after enjoying Sir Ralph's hospitality and the festivities that fashion prescribed, the Edmund Verneys were to make their home in the old Manor-house at East Claydon where Mary Abell had spent her childhood. But the assembled aunts and cousins, who warmly applauded Edmund's assiduous attentions to his young wife, were provoked to find that she was at times moody, capricious, jealous, or unreasonably depressed. Whence came this strange shadow, which seemed to alter Mary's whole character, and threatened to darken her life just as a happy and useful career was opening before her?

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN CHANCERY LANE.

1662–1665.

Sir Nathaniel and Lady Hobart, the 'Sweet Nat' and 'Sweet Nan' of Sir Ralph's early days, were still, in middle life, the truest of friends and the most delightful of correspondents. Anne Hobart, with as warm and constant a heart as her sister, Doll Leeke, was more a woman of the world, a very capable housewife, and a great lover and grower of flowers. In 1652 Sir Nathaniel was made a Master in Chancery 'in Sir Ed. Leech his dead place,' and in 1658 the family removed from Highgate, that he might live near the law courts. Lady Hobart gave as her address 'A greate house in Chancery Lane, over against Lincoln's Inne, near the Three Cranes, next dor to the Hole in the Wall, within two dors of Mr. Farmer's and one dor of Judge Ackings.' The house was further distinguished as being 'nigh to the Pumpe' and as having 'a very handsom garden with a wash hous in it.' The rent, 55*l.* a year, was considered a heavy one, and as there were more rooms than they required, Anne Hobart set her wits to work to reduce expenses, by letting part of the house to relations during the London season. Her first experiment of taking in her married daughter, Lady Smith, was not a success, and her next overtures were made to Sir Ralph, who since his return to England in 1653 had kept a *pied à terre* in Covent Garden or in Russell Street.

Sir Ralph liked the idea, but other relations, who were accustomed to lodge near him, made indignant protests against his removal to so remote a quarter. 'Uncle Dr.

and self mander most greviously att it,' writes Peg Elmes; 'I wish it a thousand inconveanyantis to you, & them moare as temted you to it.' On the other hand, Lady Hobart, with her hospitable anxieties, was not always easy to satisfy. 'You were not kind to me,' she writes one evening that Sir Ralph had dined out, when she had been 'busy all the morning buying a banquet, and in the afternoon at my Lady Bartley's to tech her to do paist, wich are all at your sarvis . . . but you not coming I intend to send my swetmeets into Iarland.' But on the whole Sir Ralph was free to come and go as he liked, and the evenings spent with Sir Nathaniel were most congenial to him.

The winter of 1662–3 found Sir Ralph with Edmund and Mary Verney settled in their own suite of rooms in Chancery Lane, to Lady Hobart's intense satisfaction. Her daughters 'Frank' and Nancy, whose strong wills sometimes brought them into sharp collision with their mother, were fond of cousin Mun, and gave his bride a kind welcome.

Mary Verney's health and spirits had been variable; when she first arrived she was popular with them all, but she became subject to fits of moody silence or of hysterical excitement during which she was a torment to herself and others. She vexed her husband with unreasonable suspicions and grievances, or, as Dr. Denton expresses it,

March 26, 1663. 'Zelotipia [jealousy] is gott into her pericranium, & I doe not know what will gett it out.' So disturbing an element in the house completely destroyed Sir Ralph's comfort; he suddenly left for Claydon and 'frightened them with his sad looks when he went away.'

Lady Hobart was constantly urging him to return.

March 25, 1663. 'Dear Sir Ralph, to tell you how much we want you a nights, is not to be put in this paper, but hasen up, & you shall see how much you shall be mayd on. Your por son will be a very misarabell man in his wif I fear; be sure you chuse a beter, but one you must have. To be serus, I am greved at hart, & though I have many trobells, yet 'tis as much to me as any of my on. If sorow or tears cold cuer hur she wold, for it has put a genarall sadnes in us all,

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Cornelius Jansen, pinx.

ANNE, LADY HOBART, DAUGHTER OF SIR JOHN LEEKE

& we wish you hear, but it can not but be a sad sight to you.'

Dr. Denton reports that Mary is 'much worse, laughs-more then before, speakes more boldly, descants uppon by standers, myselfe, Dr. Ent (for whom we sent), Sir Nat: Hob:, Sr Wm. Smyth, & few escape her. She is now averse from all phisick & bleedinge, soe that I doubt we shall have much to doe with her. If she will in any measure be ruled, I hope to get her out of this, but I shall be ever fearfull of returnes. . . . Though her illnes be out of the usuall Road of other distractions, yet I doe not like it the worse, but doe believe she is very capable of Cure.' April 9, 1663.

Sir Ralph thinks that 'all the Phisick in the World will not cure her, unlesse she strive against her Malancholly, & in a good measure proove her owne Doctor.' He forwards 'a couple of Rent Capons the miller sent my Daughter with two Dozen Puddings for Lady Hobart & another two Dozen for Mary's Breakfast,' but he declines to return. Aunt Isham keeps Sir Ralph's room aired. 'Now Mis Hubbord and I have a Little more pleasure in your Bead than we had att the first,' she writes; 'itt was so soft as itt had all most kiled us. So now we have gote a quilte & Lie very well. But we wante your good companey.' March 23, 1663.

Edmund had small chance of getting his affairs into order with such distracting anxieties and expenses, and he was often trying to economise in the wrong place. He had not a horse to ride, and his father, who 'is overstocked with Jades, having 17 at grass & 8 more at the house,' will not lend him any, 'because you ought to keep your own, the country wonders how you can bee without them, & censures you very much for it.' He begs his father to be at the Manor Court which the steward holds in his absence at East Claydon: 'Tout iroit mieux, car vostre presence abbattroit leur insolence, à cause de la veneration qu'ils vous doivent.'

Mr. Butterfield rates Mun vigorously for his management of his wife's land: 'I hate this rack-renting 'tis worse than usury . . . my own small rents come in roundly without any calling for.' He fears Mun will soon have all his land

thrown on his hands, 'for none will ever come to your termes but some ale-house chap-men that never mean to pay. 'Tis not for the profit of the landlord to have to do with such customers, out of whose fingers 'tis more difficult to get rents, then to do all one's other busines. 'Tis a poore trade to be alwayes proffering one's commodities either to such as we know will not buy, or will not pay.' The White House was still in Mrs. Abell's hands, and there was a long but friendly bargaining over the terms on which Edmund should take possession of it.

Feb. 1, 1663.

Mary Verney's health improved in the summer; she and her husband stayed with Sir Ralph at Claydon House, went with him and Lady Elmes to visit 'Lady Vere Gawdy': and then on to the Warners,[1] rich relations of Mary's, living at Milner in the same neighbourhood. Lady Hobart is curious to know from Sir Ralph 'how you did lick your tret. I hear it was much beyond Croshall, i desier the relason from cosen Elmes.'

There are 'large expressions' of regret from all the company at Croweshall at their departure, to the which Sir Ralph desires to make a suitable return, but he writes to Doll Leeke, from Milner at 11 o'clock at night: 'Though you love a long letter, you know I love a short, & I am sure you are ever best pleased with what is most agreeable to the Lazy Humour of, Deare Cozen, your sleepy Dull, yet most affectionate humble servant.' To Lady Gawdy he writes, 'I thanke you hartily over and over againe; 'tis the King's own way of Rhetoricke when hee receives the greatest Boones, soe that I hope it may be allowed to bee courtly & in Fashion.' Dr. Denton hopes that Mary 'is welcome home, & that she hath left Mrs. Zelotipia behind.'

Oct. 3, 1663.

Edmund writes to Lady Hobart: 'Madam, my thankes to you for receiving my family last winter, must at this time bee Ushers to desire the same favour of your Ladyship, if it may sute with your occasions, for I esteeme it not the least of my happinesse to live among such good company; to the end I may be as little trouble as possible, I doe

Nov. 11, 1663.

[1] Mrs. Warner was Mr. Gale's daughter.

intend, if you thinke fitt, to bringe up Besse a purpose to cleanse my chamber, & to doe all other necessary work, so that I shall be one more in number now then I was before.' He will wait on her 'about the latter end of the Terme, & stay till a little after Christmasse.'

Undeterred by former experiences, Lady Hobart was happy in her hospitable preparations. Sir Ralph's quarters must be quite to his liking. 'I have whited the room, & stars hed, & clened the bed and hanings. Pray send me word whether the chamber shall be paned at the full bignes or no. If it be, it will be Ligheter at the chimny, but then your beach box must stand in one of the closets. The dor must goo in by your man's beds fet. Now fur the stabels. i have my chos of 2; one in Magpy Yard. Thar is a pond in the yard to wash the horses and very good water. It will hold four horsis, and the hay loft will hold 4 lod of hay; ther is bins for ots. Thay say they ar very honist and sivell people; judg Ackings coach has stod thar this 14 year. Now thar is another at the Red Harp in Feter Lan; tis one turning mor beyond the Magpy, but it has the same convenency. The Magpy is 16 pound a year, if thay Log a man; the other i can have for 14 pound.' A little later she has 'paynted all the windows and mayd all clen. You may come when you will, but you sayd you will Ly on a quilt, thar fer I must beg you to bring on, for i have non. I have mayd all my hous beter than it was for clennes, but i am very wrought in my stomack. Pray send me som grens to set agans my new wall & som Jeseney & hunicuckells.' Oct. 16, 1663.

For Edmund and his wife she has prepared the 'gret chamber. I now want a bed; if it be not to much trobell to you to send up som curtans & valanc, for at presant I want som. If it be your wroght ons, or any other, it will be much mor convenant for them, & thay shall hav the Low rom at thar sarvis to set in, & to bring all compeny in to, for we did want that very much Last year. Hur mayds shall have a very good Login to thar selfs whar hur truncks shall stand. . . . Pray tell Bes King she must Leve tiling storys; my mayds dred

hur, thay Live quietly senc she went. But for what she sayd to me, I forgive hur, & wold have her com to dow thar worck; it will be very convenant for me. She may wash all thar clos hear. Say nothing to hur master, & pray Let them bring up 2 par of shets for thar on bed. I will have on hundred of fagets Layd into your wod hous redy aganst you com. My mayd shall Ly in all the beds, & all shall be well ared.'

Mrs. Abell hopes her dear Mary may 'inioy the pleasures of the towne, which God be blessed, you have all the reasone in the world soe to doe. I am troubled with that illness at my hart that I was when you left me. I have often wished my selfe with you since you went from hence, that I might in some part partake of your pleasure, but that is a thing that I have bine weaned from a long time, & the onely comfort that I have now left me is your Deere selfe. I have soe great a tye & obly-gation upon me for my Dearest of frinds sake, as allsoe for your owne sweet deportment allways towards me, that it hath for ever obliged mee.' But these lovable qualities were again to be sadly over-clouded. The noise and bustle of town life probably affected poor Mary's nerves, and she had not been long in Chancery Lane before the distressing symptoms returned with increased violence.

The relations had hoped much for Sir Ralph from Edmund's marriage. His extreme kindness to all the younger ladies of the family, and the pleasure he took in their society, promised great happiness to a daughter-in-law. He had given his son's bride the kindest welcome. We know that he was not exacting as to the amount of book-learning to be demanded of a woman, but he was fastidiously alive to any lack of politeness and good breeding, and, no lady could be permitted to do the honours of his house who did not come up to his fine standard of taste and courtesy. Such were the traditions left by his mother and his wife; it was their want of refinement that made the society of some of his sisters so trying to him. Mary Abell, though homely and unformed, had the gentle voice and manner belonging to

an unaffectedly sweet and modest nature, and she was young enough to learn all Sir Ralph's example could have taught her, had not her unhappy malady completely estranged him from her.

The degree of moral responsibility attaching to actions on the borderland of sanity was a problem far beyond the medical science of the day; and Sir Ralph took a severe view of Mary's want of self-control. As she grew worse, the slovenliness of her person and attire, and the indecorum of her conduct, aroused in him nothing but disgust; her screams, and her still more terrible laughter, so irritated his nerves, that his only wish was to fly from any house in which she might be. All Lady Hobart's plans for him were overthrown; the old opinion once more prevailed, that he would be driven to marry again, and that his choice was likely to be Vere, Lady Gawdy. Another version of the rumour reached that lady, and she hastens to congratulate him: 'I heare you are not farr from inioyinge A Considerable pleasur, if our sex might procure it you; if it bee so, may all that renders women les worthy then Men bee exempt from the Parson you shall make happie.'

He let them talk, and left town for Claydon in January, 1664. making the journey in one day. Lady Hobart entreats him while he is alone to go to bed betimes; 'i mack my Nat dew so . . . all here want you espeshally Nancy,' whose wild manners had 'gron sivell' in Sir Ralph's company. 'We have a bad day or tew with my swet she cosen Varney. She has the mesells, & I fear in gret danger . . . your son Lis in a palet in hur chamber. I must tell you, if she war the quen she cold not be beter locked to. I wold not for the world have hur dy in my hous, but god's will must be don. She has asked her husban pardon, & is sory for what she has don, & has promased to be a new woman if she live.'

The best side of Mun's nature was brought out by his wife's sad condition, much as she had tried his patience; the terrible symptoms which so repelled Sir Ralph only made Edmund more constant and pitiful in his attendance

upon her. He sent frequent reports of her health to Claydon.

Feb. 1, 1664. 'Mon très cher pere,—J'ai beaucoup a vous escrire touchant plusiers choses, mais je ne puis rien dire, je suis tellement affligé a cause du tres grand danger dans lequel ma pauvre femme gist à present, elle a les Rougeoles dont le danger je crois est passé, mais elle a une fièvre continue, qui me perce le coeur, par manque de repos n'ayant point dormi il y a environ cinq nuits. . . . Dieu a soign des petits aussi bien que des grands, & pour moi je mets tout mon espoir en lui seul, & je le supplie avec toute soumission imaginable qu'il daigne redonner la pleine santé à ma chère et vertuese femme.'

The household in Chancery Lane is struck by the sensibility he displays; his father is afraid of his being too constantly with his sick wife, and begs that he will walk out in the garden; while Mr. Butterfield acknowledges 'though I were heartily sorry for the cause of your sorrow, yet it pleased mee to heare how passionately you tooke it, & I hope this demonstration of your affection, will take off all occasion of future jealousies.'

In a few days Sir Ralph was back in town; poor Mary, having recovered from the measles, fell much more seriously ill with small-pox. Doll Leeke's solicitude on her behalf was tempered with dread of the infection for lives still more precious to her. She is anxious that Sir Ralph should not go into the sick chamber. Mary happily recovered 'without any inconveniency to her complexion.' Mrs. Abell gives some motherly advice: 'There is now noe thing more remaines to make yourselfe hapy in this world, then to have a cheerfull hart, & a good opinion of your selfe.' Nothing was more completely out of Mary's reach than a cheerful heart, but she seemed fairly well, and by the advice of the whole family Edmund went to Claydon with his father, for rest and change, after his arduous nursing. Lady Hobart, Frank and Nancy offered with unselfish courage to take charge of his wife.

March 3, 1664.

The state of public affairs made Sir Ralph and Dr. Denton

very anxious. A subservient House of Commons was ready to surrender the chief safeguard which the Long Parliament had provided against the King governing without calling a Parliament. It was in accordance with the best traditions of the county that the member for Buckingham should throw himself into the breach, risking the loss of the Court favour which he had been thought to value only too highly. 'The debate on tuesday was about the Trienniall Bill,' writes Dr. Denton, 'for the Damninge of which Prynne spake most desperately & S^r^ R[ichard] T[emple] as desperately to preserve it, . . . but all in vaine, the Bill is ingrossed, marcht upp to the Lords & soe farewell Magna Charta.' Sir Nathaniel Hobart is not of Dr. Denton's opinion; he thinks that Mr. Solicitor in defending the new Bill 'had both right & rhetorick of his side.' The Lords passed it 'without any alteration, tho' there wanted not Critticks who quarreld both with the form & the words, but the wiser Lords thought it not safe to returne it to the Commons with any amendment for fear of Mr. Vaughan & Sir Rich. Temple.' 'Vaughan is lookt upon as malcontent'; he 'would have raised a filthy dust' had he reached town sooner.

March 25, 1664.

March 31, 1664.

April 1, 1664.

March 20, 1664.

The news of Mary does not improve. 'We have had a sad day with your dafter,' writes Lady Hobart. 'She now hats us all but thar to mayds, & this day she has bin kind to franck wich dos ples me much, for she must not be out with all at once. I have no mor to say but Love your self, & mack much of honis Sir Raphe, for when he is gon, his frinds will not find shuch another. I am suer por me shant, thar for Love hur that is Sir your sarvant to command A. Hobart.' 'Tusday our cosen was very ill all day, and hyly discontented. At night thay had no way but to give hur a sleping pell, & she slep all night & till ten in this morning, & wacked very tame but sulen. We had much adow to get hur to eat a bet, but with much in trety at Last she did eat a leg of a rabit, & had a mind to goo a brod & i did goo with hur as fur as Kensington, & as we cam back she wold goo in to the parck, & if she will she must and did, & was very well but sayd very letill, but as we cam hom she wished she had

March 23, 1664.

never com to London, but stayd with dear mother, for nobody dos love hur but she and por Jan. And tould the gearls & me she mought have lived if she had had som about hur, & raled on us all, & begon to gro very bad. So at last I did persuad hur to wright to hur hus to let hur Live with hur mother. So she is now a writing in gret wroth. She says he shall hear a pes of hur mind. Bats [Dr. Bates] is out of town,' but Dr. Denton at night 'gave her dainty ease, & soe she continued all Wenesday, & marcht abroad.'

March 29, 1664. Edmund writes from Claydon: 'My Deare wife,—It was no small joy to mee the reading your lines, and the hearing of your riding fourth, whereby I take it for granted that you are not so ill as you would seem to be—this good newes came to me by my man after my returne from Northampton Fayre, where I have bought you three gallant bay coache-horses, for to carry you abroade a ayring after your tedious sicknesse, therefore pray thee to be of a couragious & cheerefull spirit and chase away all those timerous & melancholy thoughts which make thee conceit thy selfe in more danger than really thou art: my deare soule if thou hast any kindnesse for me be ruled by me & the rest of thy freinds, who are with thee, and do not think thy selfe more knowing then all of us, but thinke thy husband adviseth thee best, when he desireth thee to banish all despayring fancies, & to submitt unto our great Makers pleasure, be it in life or death or any affliction whatsoever, & that not only without repining but also with cheerfulnesse: and as touching my particular part, thou mayst assure thy selfe it hath & shall be acted with all the demonstrations of a pure and sincere love towards thee, & I do send my servant as my forerunner to know at this time how thou dost, hoping to heare yet of thy growing better & better before I see thee, w^ch^ shall bee as soone as possibly my businesse will permitt, yea & sooner too if thou requirest it.'

March 16, 1664. The improvement is not sustained, and Lady Hobart's mind misgives her: 'Pray dow not stay to Long, nor kep your son, for i am so full of fears that i dar not stur, for fear she shold have a freck of running out . . . in earnes she is

very disablegin. I fear you have played the arant Theife with me for all my fin seeds, I have bin starck mad for them; it was ill don to tack all. Send me som of them agan, or your wig shall off. As the weather is windy & stormy abrod, we have had our shar with my cosen with in. She has bin very ill yuemered, by fits i may tell you mad. She has cryed & scremed & singed & raled on us all, & por docker tow. Now Bats is all & all with hur; she says she thinks in hur hart he is not yet corupted, but thar is nothing but hur mayd Jan, but longs for hur deth. She dos says such things as flesh and blod never hard. To days i kept from hur, only morning and night Locked in to see how hur to mads did order her.

'She has tacken ephsome waters this thre days. I fear her ill yumer will never be quered [cured]. For two days she did cry send for hur hus, but now she is off from that, but she dos hat us all. O dear sur raph i feare she will never be well; hur por hus will have a sad tim with hur. He must stick to it, but for us we may be quit of it in tim. I lock on her as one has brought a fourtin to your son, but tis with so many ill yuemers, that he had beter have had a sober woman in her smock. God give him pashenc to bar his cros. . . . My hous has bin very unfortunat to hur, & she says she will set a cros on it. We shall be very hapy & quiet when we have got you agan. The garden locks so findly you wold be plesed with it. Dear Sir be Leve i cold sarve you next to my Nat with my Lif. . . . She says we wold poisen hur. Pray Let hur husband com up, for i can not abyd to be raled at. He will kep hur from it.'

Her next letter has been labelled 'Lady H. persuades Sir R. V. to marry.' 'Sir I am Joyed to hear you ar will. You have the plesuer of the country & the fin flours now in the spring, but I cold wish that worck men war as hard to get as gold then you wold not set them a worck. You had beter be hear & viset the fin wedows so in time you mought get a companion; tis tim, for when i lock on that plas whar you have Layd out so much mony, & you still a lon at Bed & Bord, i thinck half that, with a good vartus hansom sober

bedfelow war beter, as now your cas stands. For I fear your sonn will not have much comfort in this woman, for in deed she gros wors than ever. She gros very malisas in hur toung to us all. She has set us all out to Sir Robart wisman in a bas maner.' Dr. Denton is 'Cock sure she putts on & assumes much, very much of the vastly extravagant humors.'

An entreaty for Edmund's return is the ever recurring burden of Lady Hobart's letters; she is in deep distress at the poor woman's vagaries. 'She gos out with her mayd to Lincsondend chapell. Thay goo so Lick trampis, so durty tis a sham to see them. Docker denton did chid them soundly. Now she will have coridon [Dr. Colladon]. Truly she is starck mad . . . Sir Robart wiseman says it war fit she shold be removed . . . for his part he wold not have hur for a hundred pounds in his hous. Thay say he gave hur very good councill, & did chid hur mitily. . . . I fear she will be wors; she eats one bet & feds Jan with another, & drincks to hur, & they Ly in on another's arms; so much dearnes i never saw. She bit Bes to-day & tor hur hed, for she was in the hall, & begon to fall a roring, & she tock hur up in hur arms & cared hur up, be caus thar was compeny about. Now dear sur Raph send her hus up, for she will dow som extravagant thing, & I can not help it. I have don all I can, it will not dow. Dear dow not tack it ill that i dow not goo to hur, for my care shall be never the Les. . . . I am slepy and vexet, & now I fear I have vexed you, but I say no mor.'

Sir Ralph still lingered on and was anxious to delay his son's return to such sad duties. Dr. Denton supports Lady Hobart's appeal. 'I leave the pretty stories to my Lady to write, but its high time both you and your son were here.'

April 4, 1664. This letter crossed one of Mun's to his wife, remonstrating with her on her ingratitude to such good friends: 'You yeild to your black melancholy and dismall humours so much that they overcome you at last in such measure as to make you seeme extravagant; but pray do so no more, & then & never till then will I beleeve that you love me.'

Dr. Denton writes again: 'this morninge I went accord- April 9 1664.
inge to custome to visitt my neece, who kept me an houre by the clock, & I beleeve by her good will would not be without a Phismicary, a minute by night nor by day, & therefore I must love her dearely, but in truth I used her very coarsely, for she drest her selfe in all hast to goe to church, & I kept her in by force. She was gott halfe way downe staires, & I made Besse take her in her armes & carry her upp, I told her in plaine tearmes that she was mad & was now to be used as those in Bedlam, & that her maids should be putt away, & strangers putt to her to master her, & that I would not venture her husband to sleepe with her. Though I talked all the while after this rate, yet (whatever she thought) she gave me not an ill word, but seemed rather the better for it. You will find that rough meanes will prevaile best & most with her. I pitty poore Mun, & longe to see you both here, and soe good night to you.'

'Yesterday docker Bats saw hur in a wors fet then ever April 7, 1664.
he did,' Lady Hobart writes, '& he sayd he wold com no mor. This day she raves for Prydian [Dr. Prujean] but till my cosen coms i will dow nothing. I will run away if he coms not. Dear sur, pety your son & at present por me. Tusday was hur bearthday, & the docker tould hur he wold com & drinck hur health, & so he did, & bespock all he wold have & brought all his family. They set him on the scor abot forty shilings, ther was Mr. fuler & his wif & all the rest, & thay war very mery. She cam down, & for half an hour did cary hur self will, but be for & afther she was as bad as ever.' Lady Elmes wrote of these dismal festivities to her brother: 'The 5th instant we all drancke your helth att my lady Hobart's; my uncle Dr. inviteing himselfe & all of us heare to supper to my Neese Verney, it being her berthday. Soe she was forsed to treat us, my uncle asureing her he & all his wolde come to her. I wish I had cause to say we did it with Joy.'

Mun returned soon after his wife's birthday; he had only been gone a fortnight, though his absence had seemed

April 8, 1664. so long to Lady Hobart. He wrote to his father telling him of his poor wife's extravagances; two nurses are constantly with her. 'Mon oncle Gale n'est pas en ville, mais le chevalier Wiseman me conseilla de la mettre dans la maison d'une nommé Lentall, en la rue d'Aldersgate, qui prend des gens comme cela, mais me semble à moi, et à d'autres de mes amis, que ce lieu la est trop scandaleux et deshonorable. Je voudrois bien que ma mère fut ici.'

Lady Hobart is full of pity for the poor husband. 'Truly it has put him in gret Distractions, but now i hop he will bar it beter, sene he sees it can be no beter. For presane she is removed, & it is so remoet that she can not be hurd to your chamber. We have borded up the wendow & Locked & bared up all saf. In earnis she is in a wors madnes then ever, though not so raving, for now she wil nether drinck, nor tack her fisick, but Ly & bemon hur self. She is falen quit away; her thy is no bigher then Besis arm, & as Limp as can be. At this rate she can not Last. . . . Pray send up if you have it, the spon to put fisick
April 15, 1664. doun hur throt.' 'Now she thincks hur selfe bewiched, & i am one & have an evell ey, but this is not to the purpos. My nat I blis god is very will, & very much your sarvant. I am the worst in the hous, but rub out. I shall chear up when you com.' Dr. Denton has 'cut off her haire.'

April 10, 1664. 'I pray bee alwaies uppon your Guard,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I meane by way of Watchfulnesse, for if she will hurt her selfe in those sad fits, none can bee secure thats with her. I shall pray for her recovery, & that Heaven would direct you in this greate businesse. God
April 11, 1664. bless her & you.' 'Tell me who is about your wife Night and Day, for she must not bee left alone, nor with any that are affrayed of her. I am soe troubled for her, that
April 18, 1664. it puts my Businesse out of my Head.' . . . 'I finde you wish me at London, & were it in the least kinde advantagious to you or your Wife to have me there I would come away at a minutes warning. But since I can doe neither of you two any good, perhapps I may stay heere a few dayes longer, in hopes to heare some better Tydings of her, for the

truth is it affects me soe much heere, that I am not very desirous to come nearer, for though she speakes scencibly, & that you thinke she doth not rave, yet I heare she often makes a very noyce, soe that she is heard by the Neighbours, & that must needes encrease the greife of any man that heares it. God direct you for the best. I thinke you may doe well to meet your Mother halfe a mile out of Towne with your coach & carry her to your Wife presently; I thinke she will take it kindly. She comes upp in Sexton's coach. The House you speake off in Aldersgate St. I doubt is for a meaner sort of people. Tis best to let her owne friendes dispose her, for that will give more satisfaction to all that side, & thats to bee your endeavour, for all your owne friendes are satisfied already.'

The perplexed husband hears of a woman named Clark, who undertakes to cure his wife in two months for 20*l.*; but he dares not trust Mary to her without consulting her uncle Gale. Edmund will not consent to put her in a public institution, or in any house where they would be free to take in other patients; he thinks of taking a private lodging, observing exactly all that the doctors prescribe for her treatment. Sir Ralph replies: 'I know not what to say to the Woeman more then this, that unlesse her owne friends desire & advise it, twill not bee fit for you to put her to bee cured, for if any ill accident should follow, all the world would blame you for it. I confesse divers Woemen have very good receits, & good successe too, & frequently have cured those that the Drs. have not; but all that will not excuse you from a just censure.'

Lady Hobart writes: 'Your son's wif is very ill uemored still. I am the divell of divells; I sent hur hus in the contry, & she thincks i kep him away all day, & thes ar the quarels with me. Thay ar removing hur; god blis hur whar ever she goos. Mrs. Beckerstaf had a dafter, as she is 13 year, & a woman did cuer hur. The woman was hear & dos ax but 20 pound, & dos not desier it till she is cuered. I find the dockers are not wiling to Let it be don that way. She is one of that quality that must not be delt with Lick

April 21, 1664.

another, but if she war my child I shold venter hur. But your son has a wolf by the ear.'

The spring of 1664 was 'a rare season,' Croweshall was in more than its usual beauty, and Doll Leeke longed for Sir Ralph 'to smell the sucklins and the stocks & to see the new trees grow.' There is a little Vere now, the light of her grandmother's eyes, chasing butterflies in the prim old garden, who sends a baby message that 'she owes hir dear Verney a thousand kisses for glofes & ribins' and desires 'her constant service' to him. Lady Gawdy is shocked to hear that her old friend is so much upset by the family

May 12, 1664. troubles that he thinks of going abroad. 'You must pardone mee,' she writes, 'if I presume to tell you, that if you forsack your one contry, & should goe by yond sea, you would bee very unjust to your sonne, your selfe, & to all that have the honour to bee related to you. This is a time most proper of all your life to sett at the helme, & to help steere for your famelys good. . . . It is possible the wisest parsons may faile in there iudgments, when there consernes dus transport, & a foole may chanse to show them the neerest way to there

May 1664. hapines; if I were so blest I should never againe repine at my want of wisdom. I am extremly greved to heare the sad condission of your daughter dus so highly woorke upon you. Deare Sir you have to sattisfie your selfe that never parson in the world has used such a relation more oblegingly, nor passed by all offences so silently as you have. Therefore doe not destroy your selfe by discontent.' Sir Ralph assures her that whatever his thoughts may have been he has no present intention to travel, and her obliging letter has convinced him 'that tis not yet fit to be donn.'

April 27, 1664. Doll Leeke is of opinion that 'they take a very ill way with my cossen Verney to send hir to Dr. prijon's; I never heard of any he cured, and hirs is of that natur, that if she wear well, the next thing that crost hir yumer should put hir

May 18, 1664. in it again.' 'Let not that Doctor yus hir any more so ruflly,' she writes again later. 'I studed hir a littell, & I am much deseved if any Doctor can make a perfect cure in hir. Nothing but death can free hir from that disese, which

will be a blesing to her & to us all . . . I wish my self with you som times to make you mery, though my yumer is not very gamesom.'

Mary's health improved, however, beyond expectation, and by the middle of August she was moved to East Claydon accompanied by 'the woman Dr.'

Sir Ralph writes from Preshaw: 'Mun, I very much desire to heare how your Wife is now, & whether she begins to minde her houshold businesse, & ordering her Family. In earnest you must perswade her to it by all the wayes you can & commend her doing of it at all times, & though she doe not doe it well, yet you must commend her for it, & keepe her to it, still; for as her condition is I had rather she should doe it, though she doe it ill, then any body else though they doe it well. Beleeve me though you loose by her doing of it, yet you will gayne ten times as much by it another way; for if she would bee brought to imploy her minde about it, I am confident it would doe her more good then all her Phisick. Let her governe the whole Family, & let her give order for everything in it, & not trust to others doeing of it, but doe it her selfe. And I thinke tis best to get her to keep a house booke, & set downe all thats bought, & cast it upp once a Weeke (every Friday night). She her selfe may cast it upp as often as she pleaseth, but you need doe it but once a Weeke. Be sure you put this on with all your endeavours, for if anything under heaven doe her good, tis imployment, a full & constant imployment. God blesse you both togeather—Your loving father R. V.' Aug. 24, 1664.

Edmund sends him a cheerful account of their joint doings. 'Ma femme se porte bien, mais ayant hier beu beaucoup de vin, et mangé du fromagge, elle commencoit au soir a estre un peu detourbée . . . Je suis d'avis qu'elle mesnagera sa maison tres bien, et qu'elle si addonnera avec le temps. Nous sommes allés, elle et moy seulement, disner chez le Chevalier Pigott, ou elle se deporta extremement bien, devant grande compagnie, nous avons esté aussi chez mon Cousin Dormer, et demain nous irons à Ratcliff.' Aug. 29, 1664.

The friends who had so patiently borne with Mary in her

madness were not forgotten. Edmund sent Lady Hobart's daughter Frank a present of 5*l.*, and 10*l.* to sister Anne. Frank replies: 'I have sent according to your desires the spatula, which I was in hops you would not have used any more. For the mony it came to my hands—I have given the ten pounds to Nan, who returns her humble thanks to you. But for the last it gave me soe great a surprise that it put me strangly out of contenance to receve favours of that nature where I have merited soe little. I can not expresse the joy I have to heare you arrived safe at Claydon, where I wish my poor cousin may have an absolute cure. It shall be my continuall prayer, & in order to her futer repose, let me begge of you to be more kind, for of late you have bine too ruffe. Consider you have your perfect reson; she is deprived of hers, & imput all her errors & indiscretions to her distemper, & bare with them as you have done formerly. There is nothing will be more acceptable to god, nor can any thing render you more considerable to all the world. I hope you will be more noble then to trample upon what is in your power. Let not any of her little miscarriages chang the goodness of your natur. Beleve me cousin, it is the great respect I have for you, & the affection I beare to your wiffe maks me take this liberty.'

Lady Hobart could not but rejoice to have her house to herself again; she is looking into every chest and cupboard with severe reflections upon Mary's maidens. 'Bess is the gretis slut I ever had in my lif & now i com to lock up all my things has destroyd me mor then ever any sarvant did, & the basest desembling wench ever cam into any bodys hous. She is refreshed by a visit to Sir Thomas and Lady Hewitt at Pishobury. 'If you wold tack your coch & com & fech me,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'you ned not fear your recepson; it will be be yound your mearit. I wish you hear, for in my Lif you never saw mor netnes & clendlynes; & then a willcom with so much fre kindnes as wold winn any creture to admier it. I never was mor plesed in any plas in my Lif.' Sir Ralph had been invited shortly before to dance at 'Arabella Hewytt's wedding.'

Lady Hobart writes to Mun, 'I have a tru Love for you both. She is a very good woman, & if she mends will be consedrabell to you. I hear she locks to hur hous wil, & gros a prety huswif & delights in it. Oysters ar very good, & I know you Love them, so I have sent you a basket of them.' 'My wife (I praise God) is very hansomly recovered every way,' Edmund replies, '& did fully resolve were she not so very slow (I know not how sure shee may bee), to write unto your Ladiship an epistle of hearty thanks for all your singular & manifold favours whereof you have been so liberall to her & mee both. Indeed they have been so vast, that I cannot imagine how she'lle ever be able to set forth her deepe sence thereof, for I am certain my Witt can never do it for either of us.'

Edmund expresses in every letter his joy in his wife's recovery; both were taking pleasure and interest in their home and its plenishings. Frank Hobart is to send down curtain rods; Sir Nathaniel is to order a frame for what his wife calls Edmund's 'gibbonish Whimwham'; while Mary at her own pace writes a number of epistles to Aunt Elmes about feminine shoppings. 'Sr Ralph & my cosen Leke both teles me, as you ded before, that gimp is out of fashing; tharfore i shall quit my sellf of the troble by taking your advice to worke a dimity bed in gren cruells. For a drawing-rome i should have 2 squobs, & 6 turned woden chars of the haith of the longe seates. Be pleased to by a tabel & stands of the same coler; & for the same rome a pair of audirons, doges, fire shvl, tongs & thre bras flours with irnes to fasten my glas. I have yet my closet to furnish, & I beg your asistanc in it. I think to hange it with peregon, but the coler, & whether it shall be watered or no i leve to you. If goodnese might merit honer, thar is none could be greater then dere Aunt Elemes; my self only hapey in being alied to a person so truly vertuous.' Aunt Elmes can find no tolerable chairs under 7*s.* apiece, and the squobs 10*s.*

Mary's improved health was not without relapses; her husband describes her in the beginning of December as 'toujours fantasque.' 'Mun,' writes Sir Ralph, 'I am un- Dec. 8, 1664.

willing you should be soe much alone tis ill both for your Wife & yourselfe too. I am glad the Rogues got not to your Horses you must let Gutridg lie over the Stable. I could now get you a furious Mastiffe, but tis little and indeed too furious, espetially for you that dwell in a Towne & soe neare the Highway, forthis even in the day time will let non come to the House, & had you such a Curr, I would never come to your House, having knowne soe much Mischiefe donn by them. A little yealping Dogg that were watchfull & angry were much more usefull to you, for the Rogues have tricks to quiet Mastiffs, but non can quiet these little Barking currs.'

'To deale freely with you,' he writes a few days later, 'I shall not send you a Furious curst Mastiffe, God knows there is too much of that already. . . . But to be more searious, I am hartily sorry to heare your wife hath been ill of Late, I pray humour her all you can till this publique time is over. God blesse & direct you.'

Edmund was inquiring for a responsible person who could wait upon his wife, and keep up some discipline in a household that sadly needed it. Mary had seen and liked a certain Mistress Felton, but the latter made so many stipulations about her salary of 12*l.*, about the chambermaid that was to work under her, and other matters, that Edmund was not very anxious to have her. Mrs. Felton was not free till the spring, and he specially desired that Mary should be saved fatigue during the Christmas season, when they hoped to celebrate their return home by a series of entertainments to their neighbours.

During the summer of 1663, Mary Eure had suddenly abandoned her Elizabethan attitude, and given her heart and hand to a Yorkshire squire, William Palmes. Her best friends knew nothing of it, 'My marriage,' as she afterwards wrote to Sir Ralph, 'being for some reasons concealed from almost all my relations.' She had now engaged her old friend Luce Sheppard to come to her for an expected confinement, and Edmund, who had not forgotten Luce in preparing his Christmas presents, tried to get her to help

his wife, before she should be needed by 'Cousin Palmes' in February. Luce was engaged till the New Year, when she hoped to 'ogment his trouble' by coming to wait on him and his lady. Another possible lady housekeeper was the widow of a Mr. Major, with 40*l.* a year of her own, of a sedate age, the daughter of a Mr. Crisp, whose house she used to manage; 'so she has had experience, and is as well educated, and as well born, but less necessitous than Mistress Felton.' Sir Ralph writes, 'I do not know Mrs. Major, but I beleeve her to bee very honest & modest, because all the Brood have been soe. But I must tell you many of them are very slow, & (as we call them) softly persons, & being behinde hand in the world, have not had any Breeding, & if this bee soe she cannot bee fit for your purpose.'

Edmund asks Sir Ralph's help in organising his Christmas entertainments: Michel Durand has become head cook, and he wants to borrow him. Sir Ralph entered heartily into their hospitable plans. 'Sir Richard Temple tells mee the newes at Buckingham is, that you will keepe the best Christmas in the Sheire, & to that end have bought more frute and spice then halfe the Porters in London can weigh out in a day. I have writ to tell the Cooke that hee shall doe my businesse about the Beefe at such times as you can most conveniently spare him from East Claydon; and soe hee may very well, for hee hath nothing to doe for mee but to make 2 collars of Beefe, & bake some in Potts. I am very glad to heare your Wife is so well, I pray remember mee to her, & tell her I wish her a Merry Christmas.' Plaistow the carrier expects a Christmas box of 10*s.* for the delivery of letters, which is what he receives at Claydon House. Dec. 22, 1664.

Sir Ralph is anxious that his sporting dogs should go to Sir John Busby to be trained, but Sir John does not think the season favourable. 'For Gamboy and Fleury if they are not entered they will be spoyled, for when they are too old they will not enter so well, & bee so easily corrected for theire faults; you know tis soe with children, & if Sir John Busby bee unwilling, let mee know it, never presse

him, for I can send them where they shall be welcome. I pray tell me how Mary-gold lookes.' 'You see what a poore case Sir John Busby had made of Mopsey,' he writes again; 'she looked like one of Pharoah's Leane Kine; on the other side, you keepe them soe fat, that they will burst themselves with running.' The dogs are to be 'constantly hunted.' 'I had much rather you should see it donn, then any man in England, for tis both a healthfull & a gentleman like exercise, my deare Father loved it hartily.'

'Touchant Chiens,' Edmund replies, 'dont deux (c'est à dire) Luther et Calvin sont aussi mechans que ces Arche-Heretiques desquels ils portent les noms, car comme iceux il ne cherchent pas le vrai butin de leur recompence, car ils tuent les innocens Brebis, mais principalement ce vaut-rien Calvin.' Sir Ralph orders that if the 'Whelps meddle with Sheepe, they must be tied to any Dead sheepe, and whipped soundly, but not beaten with Stickes; tis theire mettle that makes them doe, and such a fault as must bee corrected, and in time too, or else they will be spoyled. I pray let it bee carefully donn.'

He is getting Mun some mulberry trees 'of Mr. Ball of Brentford End,' 'they love a moist ground & will thrive best in it.'

Dec. 25, 1664. The country is surprised to hear of the 'monstrous sum' of 2,500,000*l.* granted to the King. Edmund thinks Holland might be conquered with half that money. A postscript of Sir Ralph's contained the bitter news which had just reached London. 'The Duch have beat us out of Cape Verde at Guiny, taken the Marchant Shipps, put our men to the sword for resisting them. De Ruiter did it with his Fleet, & tis feared hee will do us mighty mischeifes in the streights.'

The Puritans might put down roast beef and mince pies and the time-honoured festivities of this season, but naval defeats were not wont to be part of the Christmas fare which they provided for England. Edmund, whose hearty dislike of the Dutch was founded on intimate personal acquaintance, was most indignant, and thought that our reverses in Guinea might have been foreseen and prevented,

'mais cela estant fait, si j'estois digne de conseiller le Roy, je voudrois tascher par tous les moyens du Monde à me venger sur De Ruter, avant son retour; est je ne lui voudrois point donner Cartier, ni à aucun autre Hollandois en aucun lieu de l'Univers . . . et pour moy je suis content de me vendre jusques à la chemise, et puis d'aller en Personne pour punir ces villains de Belge.' Dec. 26, 1664.

Edmund Denton's widow is ill and something in Mary's condition of mental distress; Dr. Denton has been frightened 'out of 4 of his 5 senses' at a report that her mother Lady Rogers, 'who is no better than a Quaker,' is planning a marriage for her with a man 'of noe fortune & of as froward a humour as one would wish . . . the children would be undone as to breeding . . . this is of great concern to the family.' The calamity seems to have been averted, and the children were made wards in Chancery. The poor young widow died the following June, 'rather a happiness for her family than a loss.'

Edmund Verney wishes Alexander Denton 'here to Xmasse with us, & we would be merrier yet, & shew marveillous Gamball trickes.' Meanwhile the festive preparations were being hurried on; the presence of the Claydon cook ensured the success of the joints and plum porridge; but the drink caused Edmund some anxiety. He flattered himself that he had brewed a good store of strong ale, but he had no common white wine, and his best claret was too good for the occasion; 'trop genereux pour Paisanterie, en sorte que si je scavois ou achetter un peu de vin de France, a fort bon marché (je ne me souci gueres de la bonté), je l'espanderois ce Noell parmy mes Villains.' Sir Ralph believes that he may get 'Claret of 6 pence a quart . . . & good enough for the use you intend it, and twere pitty to cast away better in that way . . . I will look out some for you . . . twill be ready enough to drinke in two dayes for it shall have no Lees, & you may draw it out of the Runlet without Bottleing it, if you have no time to bottle it.' Dec. 26, 1664.

Before the wine arrives, this unthrifty host discovers

that he does not require it, because the best claret will not keep and may as well be finished; later he is glad of it again, when the strong ale proves to be no better than it should be. Mary sends loving messages to Sir Ralph, desiring his blessing, and rejoicing in the prospect of his speedy return to Claydon, where his presence will add to all their Christmas joy. He desires her to thank Heaven and be careful of her diet. Her East Claydon tenants were feasted on the 27th, Middle Claydon tenants on another day, and their third and last entertainment was given to 50 of their poorer neighbours with their wives and children. Wine and ale, good, bad, and indifferent, flowed in streams; Edmund reported that the 6*d*. claret had served its purpose well; 'il plaist les gueulles de ces gens, et aide aussi à les enivrer, mais pour mon gout il n'est guère plaisant.'

Jan. 5, 1665.

'Mun, I presume you have ended your Christmas,' writes Sir Ralph on the 5th of January, 'and I hope you have not found the charge extraordinary; I dare say a journey either to London or to Oxford for that time would have been much dearer & lesse to your credit. I am heartily glad my Daughter is soe well, I pray you remember me very kindly to her, & desire her to take noe Phisick whilst the Frost holds, but I hope when that's over she will take a little for a day or two, to carry away the reliques of the Plumbe Pyes and Plumbe Porage. I am glad Luce Shepherd comes to keepe her company for she is too much alone.' He had paid civil visits in town to Mary's uncles, Mr. Gale and Sir Robert Wiseman.

The chief local news is that Edward Chaloner has bought Steeple Claydon from his cousin. 'Il a tenu une Court là déjà en son propre nom, et ce matin il s'en est allé vers Gisborough en Yorkshire. La Veuve Busby doit laisser Addington bien tost pour tout de bon.' She is 'much troubled by disputes with her son.' Mistress Abigail was the widow of Robert Busby (Sir Ralph's legal adviser at the time of his sequestration) and daughter of Sir John Gore, knight and alderman of London. She came of a strong-willed family; her husband stood in considerable awe of her; her younger brother Dick defied the authority of the

redoubtable pedagogue at Westminster School, who was his godfather as well as his master, till Dr. Busby 'was a-weary of slashing him.' Her son, Sir John Busby, Kt., had married Mary Dormer in November 1662, and it was not surprising that after two years' experience of her mother-in-law's rule, the young Lady Busby should wish to be mistress at Addington.

Squire Duncombe's betrothed, whom he had courted so fervently, died of a fever. He also caught it, but having recovered, consoled himself with another Miss Busby, of Hogston, a Roman Catholic; John Coles, vicar in 1611, was said to have turned Papist and perverted the Busbys. They were married in April, and Sir Ralph's cook dressed the wedding dinner. Miss Butterfield was staying at the White House, and the whole party dined with the Duncombes to meet the Busbys of Addington. 'We keep good fires at Claydon, but none like Squire Duncombe's,' said Mr. Butterfield, and Mun writes of the dinner: 'On dit qu'il a acheté tous les perdris, becasses, becassines et autres volailles de cette Province pour nous entretenir.' The hospitable Squire had lately borrowed 1,000*l.* of Mrs. Abell and Sir Robert Wiseman.

Jan. 9, 1665. Mun writes, 'J'ai a cette heure fini mes festins de Noel, mais . . . avec trop grands depens, car cela m'a cousté proche 100*l.*, c'est à dire j'ai despendu 80 livres, la quelle somme est trop pour moi à jetter comme cela, si par la bonté de Dieu je vis jusques à un autre Noel je ne despenderai tant.'

Jan. 12, 1665. Sir Ralph replies, 'I am glad your troublesome & chargeable time is over, but you are certainly much out of your account, for it could not cost you halfe soe much as you speake of, you making but 3 Invitations & haveing noe Fiddles to draw other company. Dr. Townsend writ word you entertained him & Nat Smith very hansomly; and now Uncle Dr. is in the Country you had best goe visit him & get him dine with you.' Jan. 16, 1665. Edmund writes again, 'Mon très cher père, Vous doubtez si mes despens ce Noel peuvent avenir à une telle grande somme, mais sur serieuse consideration d'iceux, il faut que je vous responde (comme les Hollandois

font à ceux qui questionent leur compte, contans plus qu'il n estoit auparavant) que je crois certes qu'il m'a cousté plustost proche de 90*l.* que 80*l.* Nous n'avons pas manqué musique seulement, mais aussi nous avons eu Dançeurs qu'on appelle Morice; et tout cela je ne pouvois remedier pour cette fois.'

Edmund's lavish hospitality had reinstated him in the good opinion of his neighbours; he was at length settling down in his own home, with some prospect of domestic happiness, and had been able to increase his estate by one or two judicious purchases; as Cousin Jack Fust expressed it, 'you must needs be my Lord of East, West, North and South Claydon.'

PORCH OF THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLV.

SIR RALPH'S RELATIONS.

1661–1665.

The Restoration suited Colonel Henry Verney exactly; the world was once more fit for a gentleman to live in. He talked valiantly at first of military service, and of commanding 'Viscount Mordaunt's regiment of foot at Windsor,' but hearing that he would be employed in a lower rank than he had held during the Civil War, he found this incompatible with his dignity, and did not press the point. Sir Ralph considers that 'these punctillios are not to be stood uppon by younger brothers, especially at this time when soe very many persons of worth and honour doe rather chuze to take what they can get, then be left out of all imployment,' but he will not offer to advise him.

My Lord of Peterborough and Henry's other noble patrons were in high office, his father's name was constantly in his mouth. He was magnificent in his offers to procure a peerage for his brother and a baronetage for Dr. Denton, a commission for himself being of course included in the required fees. 'He thinks of nothing but an Irish Viscount, the usual price it seems is 2,500*l.*, if you will not give him 250*l.* per an. for his life he will take 200*l.*' Unhappily, his relatives were only moved to merriment by the prospect of such honours; but he was more successful in ingratiating himself at Court. His knowledge of horses and dogs, and his keen sporting instincts, ensured him a welcome from the King at Newmarket and other races; he was well known also to the Duke and Duchess of York. Lord Clarendon's affectionate intimacy with Sir Edmund Verney led him to

be kind to his sons, and our old friend William Gape the apothecary and his wife were in attendance upon the Duke and Duchess Anne. Eventually Henry claims a share 'in the moneys given by Act of Parl^t amongst the truly loyal & indigent officers'; he certifies that he was 'a Lieut. Coll. to Sir Humphrey Bennett's Reg^t of Horse, hath had a reall command of souldiers according to his commission; that he hath never deserted his Maj^ties or his blessed Father's service during the late times of Rebellion and Usurpation, & that he hath not a sufficient livelyhood of his own.'

The 'truly loyal & indigent gentlemen' were so numerous that Henry fared no better than many a nobler Cavalier, but to be loyal and indigent was at least a passport to the best society.

Penelope, whose letters bristle with great names, writes to Sir Ralph of the marriage of Charles Stuart, Duke of Richmond, to his second wife Margaret Banastre, widow of William Lewis. 'Upon Monday last the Duke was married, upon Tuesday he went out of town & his Duchess for Blechinton, upon Thursday the Duke & my Bro. Harry that went out of town with his Grace, are for Rochamton, the plate is to be run for that day, the Duke puts in for it but tis thought the Duke's horse will lose the match, Bro. H. has betted on the Duke's hors. . . . The Duke was pleased to do my Bro. Harry the honor as to bid him com to his weding, that was carried so privitly that no other parson was invited; but Bro. Harry was so very ill that morning that he could not Attend his honor, att diner time he went to the Duke's own lodging for there he dined very privit, Bro. Harry was so ill that he ris from diner and came home and att night he went agane to attend the Duke att the Duke's lodging, but still kept himself fasting only eating a mess of broth. . . . he is still ill but if he dos hear of a rase that is to be Run, that will carry him all the world over.'

April 2, 1662.

In June Henry is looking after his young horses at Claydon, whence Mr. Butterfield writes to Mun: 'Had you seen or heard how Mr. H. V. & Mr. Jo. Risley cheated one the other in the exchange of two admirable jades, with

June 9, 1662.

what craft & confidence it was carryed, twould make you intermit a little of your serious thoughts to take a laugh.' Henry is engaged at Christmas time 'to ride with the Duke in person the 6 mile course at Newmarket with a Nagg of his called Shoulders,' and he is a well-known figure at the various county race-meetings. Dec. 3, 1662.

In October, Penelope's husband, John Denton, died suddenly in London. Cary writes to Sir Ralph, 'I beleve the nuw widdows grife is over before you could come to comfort her. I wish no greater grife may ever come to you or my selfe then that was to Hary & her, and then I am shur wee may well bar it.' 'She is not lik to breack her hart except it bee with joy,' writes Lady Hobart, and Dr. Denton adds, 'You ought to have come thro' thick & thin to have comforted your most consolable sister.' The kind-hearted Mun does his best to regret him. 'Alas my uncle John Denton is dead, I am sorry for't, that's more than some are, altho' he should be of a greater consequence me-thinkes to them by farr.' Sir Ralph's words to the widow check our uncharitable reflections upon the poor, drunken, boorish Squire. 'And now hee is dead, I shall say nothing of him, nor will you I hope either doe or say more then is decent in such a case: for tho' you have been unhappy in him, yet hee was a Gentleman & your Husband, & twill bee your Honour to conceale his faults. . . . God grant you may make a right use of this deliverance & fit us all for Heaven.' Pen's lady friends remark that 'she has put herself into very handsome mourning, but she cannot keep within.' Oct. 29, 1663.

In spite of some plain speaking to her brother, Pen had been a patient and forbearing wife. In the worst of her troubles she could truly say, 'Had he loved me but near so well as I did, or doe yet love him, the thinges had nevor com to whot they are.'

There had been occasional tiffs between Pen and Henry; he would torment her for loans, to be repaid 'when he won his horse-mach'; but they were at heart the best of friends; they now set up house in London together, 'Harry had

never been so full of joy,' and Pen, though she called him an old fool, rejoiced in 'his good company' and in her family nickname of 'Harry's Dame.' He would ride down to the races at Quainton, Brackley, and Banstead, or to a cock-fight at Northampton, bring back his gains to Pen, or explain away his losses, and abuse the town, 'where my stay is like to be but short, for foote it in the dust I cannot, & coach-hire is too dear for my purse.'

All their friends gamble in various ways: 'Mrs. Drake's sister has just gott the best lott in the lottery, the richest sute of hangings there: the King offered more than a 1,000*l.* for them, this she had for her 10*l.*'

There was no love lost between Penelope and the Dentons, and Nancy writes to Sir Ralph the following year: 'I know that newes is very axceptabil to pepeol in the cuntry and I have wondarfull newes now, your Dearly beloved sis Denton is like to chous Hary and to marry. It is to one Mr. Wilcocks a Gentelman of Bray; he keps his coch, and he is as propar a man as her Esqre. was, but not altogathar so handsom and altho' he has a very good reput yet I think he has no more wit then my Lord Jhon if he maris her. He was beloe stars in our hous, and I rund hard & did see him, but Hary has this day caried her out of town down to Stoe. This sarves us for merth very well. Shur if he dus take her he never looked out of the right cornor of his eye, I beleve she has great store of good condisions, for she nevar maid show of any in her life, she has horded them up with her money.'

July 2, 1668. Henry's letters to Sir Ralph are full of minute directions about his horses; they are to have 'the very best grass at Claydon, these are my choicest horses and I dare not trust them for my nephew's usage, nor with noe friend but you. They are as good as can drive in a coach, and as fit for my saddell, and the only horses I have to trust to for Newmarket. The grey's feete are soe badd that noe smith can shoe him without laming him or else I had not putt him to grass. Good brother be careful of them.' Sir Ralph has them

July 13, 1668. 'fleeted in very good grasse at Knowle Hill, Tom King the

shepherd is very careful of them, and removes them constantly, but such poor lame Jades in such a surfeited condition will not bee fat in hast.' The Colonel is far from satisfied; he will not have his horses tethered. 'Good Brother . . . the worst grass you had had in your lordshipp would a binn better for them att liberty, for your own reason must needs tell you to have surfeited and lame horses tied to a stake, basting all day in the sunn, cannot bee good for their health. Tis the night's due, scope, fresh water and liberty that must cuer them, it may bee you did conclude them to bee as disorderly as their master, and soe confined them without tryall.'

The long-suffering Sir Ralph agrees to send the greys to another ground; the pasture is far worse, 'but if they will not rest quietly there, rather than suffer them to lead my horses up and down the country [hedges are few and far between] they must be tied againe.' They are to be blooded at intervals of three or four months (even the horses cannot escape the thirst of the age for bleeding), after which they are 'to be corned something more than ordinarie,' to be ready when Henry desires 'to ramble amongst his friends.' He confesses that, thanks to Sir Ralph's 'kindness and Mr. W. Tomes' care,' his horses do look very well; he has left them to Sir Ralph's 'good entertainment longer than ordinarie, it was the king's fault and not mine.' 'I saw 3 good matches at Newmarket w^ch^ pleased the king well, but not my worshippe, for I gott no money by them more then my charges. My L^d^ Lovelass lost 600*l.* of his horse, Mr. Elliot won 400*l.* of his, & my L^d^ Sherard near 300*l.* of his nagg.'

Margaret Elmes was having a hard time of it with her cross-grained husband, the small allowance he had given her when they separated was often in arrears, and it was only when Sir Ralph threatened legal proceedings that Thomas would 'protest upon the word of a gentleman' that he wished to do all that was fair and honourable, and he would deliver Sir Ralph a lecture which he dared not give his wife, about the prudence and discretion needed

Dec. 13, 1660. in 'her carriage in the world.' 'As things are with her now, a private life is most for her repute and humiliation, rather than her going to this person and that person, to no purpose to herself but to be laughed at behind her back.' He will settle her jointure as soon as his debts are paid to 'Cousin Knightly'; he assures Sir Ralph that there is no hurry, as he never was in better health in his life. 'Elmes is going to fast & pray & soe cannot write to you,' says Uncle Doctor. Matters are not much more advanced at

Sept. 16, 1661. the end of another year. The delay is now caused by 'my cousin Humphry Elmes his death, the old gentleman you see at my chamber, I having been to Henley to see him interred & am just now come up to towne. I have written a kind letter to your sister. . . . were her heart & mine, as yours & mine are in principle it were far better for her. I know I need not write to you to say nothing to the women for you know how captious generally they are. I meane only for your sister's good . . . had I matched into another family I should have been more valewed.' His wife's relations were certainly lacking in appreciation, and pronounced him to be 'the greatest tyrant in the world.'

Peg naturally wanted something more substantial than the smothering of her complaints, and Sir Ralph had to write in a severe strain to his brother-in-law: 'Haveinge had soe many Yeares Patience, more then (as a Trustee) I could well answer.' He finds it almost impossible 'to keep them quiet for both of them are colerick & high enough, & have noe great fondness for one another.' Peg, indeed, had freely expressed her opinion, that the life she would lead with him 'is worse than keeping of hogs,' without even the alternative open to the prodigal of returning to his father's house.

The unwearied peacemaker, however, got the husband and wife to meet at Claydon in October with excellent effect. Old Aunt Abercromby indeed, writing peremptorily out of her bed to desire Sir Ralph to send her a fat goose 'for All Holland-day, lest wanting that, she should want money all the year,' congratulates Nephew Elmes on his 're-nuptials.'

Peg feels that due thanks to Sir Ralph are beyond her reach, but the second honeymoon did not open smoothly. Oct. 20, 1661. 'The disasters in our jorney to London were soe many & soe great that I know you wolde a laughed sovfitiantly att me, had you but seen them. Our horses tiored as soone as we came out of Chalfont, for theare was noe fresh ones to be had, it was neare eight a clock befoare we got to Lester Hous corner, when we ware in all that fine puddle, we had like to a binn over turned but escaped it, by haveing the coach helde up, while we a lighted in that cleane plaise, & when we ware out, the coachman made shift to drive his coache into sich a plaise as he could not pas through for postes, nether could he put back again, soe we ware forsed to wolke from that Plaise to Covent Garden a fott, & not onely soe, but to take out all that was had in the coache a longe with us, for the coach was likely to stand in the feildes all night. My brother Harry was with us, but the Squir & Martin were gon home a horsback. Hary was loaded like a porter betweene his own things & his dame's.'

Margaret Elmes was a clever housekeeper, 'Madam Spye-fault' the Doctor called her (which suggests a character in 'Pilgrim's Progress'), and Sir Ralph often applied to her in domestic perplexities. His pewter plates are not to his liking. 'If they are well washed,' she writes, 'every mealle with woater and brann, soe hott as theare hands can indewar it, and then well rinsed in faire woater, and soe sett one by one, befoare the fire, as they may dry quick, I am confydent they will dry with out spots, for I never knew any sawce staine soe except it bee pickled rabbets, which stand up on the plait a pretty while, soe they will stoaine them fillthyly . . . this is all the scill I have, which I have set downe att large.' She has made him lemon cakes, which he likes when he has a cold.

The Elmes' have been at Claydon again in the winter of 1664–5 and returned with Sir Ralph to London, when Mr. Thomas caused quite a commotion by his lamentations over the loss of an 'heirloom,' described as 'a Dial of Glass with a Fly in it,' which had belonged to his family for years and

years; he felt sure that his wife had taken this precious treasure to Claydon to hang up in her window, and had left it behind there.

Aunt Elmes disclaimed all knowledge of it, but Mun, on receiving his father's commands, went down with a party from East Claydon, and calling upon Mr. Butterfield to bear witness to their exertions, the young people made merry in the old house, going from one empty bedroom to another, finding nothing at all, till in the Orange Chamber Mun exclaimed that he saw 'something like to Flye'; there was an imprisoned owl in the window lately dead. Amid shouts of laughter, the bird was carefully packed up in many wrappings, and sent off to Thomas Elmes by carrier specially addressed 'to be conveyed to him with great care and speede,' with a mocking letter in which Mun explained that this was all they could find to answer the description of his heirloom; 'I know not what you call it at Greens Norton but here at Claydon wee call it *Owle*. Sir I killed lately just such another sitting on an *Elme*, whereby I conjecture there is much sympathy between them,' &c. &c. Unhappily for the success of the jest, Sir Ralph intercepted the parcel, which he thought of suspicious bulk and softness; he kept the folio sheet of banter, and paid the carrier. 'He is a strange man,' he writes to Mun, '& his hatred to his Wife makes him doe many of these simple things. Certainly hee thinks hee saw a Diall at Claydon, or else hee could not have invented it, but I never remember anything like it in my House.'

Sir Ralph congratulates his sister when her jointure is settled, with a sly hit at her love of London. 'Madame Margery,—Rich, Rich, Rich, now your money is come, but if you are soe simple as to spend it, you shall bee caled by your Old Name, Poore, Silly, Lowsy Meg againe. This very day it came. . . . But I can teil you, that with your money, I had a letter, such a letter, that you will thinke it a good bargayne to give me halfe your Wealth to let you read it, & though my Answere to it is little worth, Yet I know you will bee soe Noble as to give me Two pence for the

sight of it. Enough of this till we meet. My Cozen Dorothy Denton is very well [at Hillesden] and Lives, and Lookes (and I am confident Thrives) as well as if she were at London. Mee thinke I heare you sweare this is a Loud Ly, And you will not beleeve it.'

Peg Elmes is quite capable of a retort. 'If we live to meete it is posable I may punish you for the stile of Maddam Megg, I see it is not good to be to longe from London, the cuntory teaching you sich oulde clownish names, not fitt for sich a spruse widower as y^r^ selfe to name. It is Enuffe to hinder the yonge bewtis from woing you, which I know will grieve you much. The incivilities I receive from Sir Thomas makes me to be all most reconsiled to the name which foremerly I was not very fond of.'

Cary still leads as busy a home life as 'souch a train of babs' must entail; good John Stewkeley is proud to see the old nursery filled a second time. 'Here are many white aprons that have long strings,' he writes to Sir Ralph of his five baby girls, '& lusty armes that will pull hard.' His eldest son Will was at 'Winton College,' but the sudden death of Mr. May his tutor there, in 1657, caused Mr. Stewkeley to send for him home; he then placed him in London at Dr. Sterne's 'private academy with some ten gentlemen more.' During the Protectorate 'that intelligence given of Oxford by severall freinds that have made a strict inquiry, diverted his father from sending him thither.' At twenty-two he is a worthless beau; Cary talks him over with Brother Stewkeley, 'who is very good to her, though hee will sometimes lett us understand hee is lord over us. I truly love him very much for his care of my children . . . hee & we are both much trobled what will become of Will Stewkeley, who lives above what his father hathe for himselfe & all the rest; as great A gamster as my brother Hary & as great a rake, & I am confident the sotillest young man in the world, but not the best natured. He is now desirous to by a Court place, so that is next to be sout for, but his mind is so wavouring that I think hee will setill to nothing. Wee A low him 60*l.* a yeare, besides my brother's 10*l.*, & he hath

lived on us most of this yeare him selfe, & latly hath taken a man unknown to his father, as all his actions are, & kept 2 horses constantly. I find him a great burden, and I am afrad my brother should work on my husband to let him live thus, or elc to increas his A lowance which hee is not a bill to due without predigisin all the rest.'

Miss Ursula has not obliged her stepmother by marrying, though she is much in company. 'Tis not my patienc only as they all make havock of, for my brother who I think hath some tye on them, crys out most shamfully on them; alas you only know the best of them,' Cary tells Sir Ralph, 'they differ so much from ther father as if he had no relation to them; bot tis none of them can make us unhappy to each other, though ther wayes lessens our Joys yet not our affections, which are absolutely fixed in each other which is amonst all my grifs the reallest comfort as can come to me.'

Cary has taken her own daughter Peg to Daubeney Turberville, an oculist at 'Crick Kerne,' who promises 'to butify her left eye,' but having seen her he reports it 'to be incurable & their judgments all to be false, that have spent about her, I have hopes strong of her right Eye which labours with four diseases, ill Eyelidds, & falling away of the haire, a spott on the pupill, & a corrupt fistula in the Corner of her Eye towards her nose. . . . I doubt not to save her Eye if you please to give mee time, I shall leave the gratification to your selfe, & my endeavours shall bee as nimble as possible.' He is to begin with 'an incision betweene her eye & nose to be kept open eight or ten weekes,' but he adds 'I shall not in all this time much torture her.' Peg underwent the oculist's treatment with 'much resolution & patienc.' Cary hears 'a good report of him & his birth is very good which maks mee belive hee will perform what he promised.' Peg is always under treatment; after this she consults 'a mounty bank,' and bears her present darkness 'with hopes of sight,' because Prince Rupert gives him a good character. He attended Pepys, see 'Diary,' June 29 and July 3, 1668.

Cary's boy Jack is at school at his uncle's charge; 'sickness & want of hare are two great blemishes, but I hope

time & helth will renuw his favour A gaine, & should I take him homb his littill larning would sure be lost, which would be an inevetabill ruing to him.' Brother Stewkeley's 'humor is to love chang which is the undoing of boys & my boy loves the place very well wher he is, which I commend in him.'

The Rev. Charles Adams was settled at Great Baddow, his first and only living; he had a fine large church, and a fair stipend, but Betty was still looking out for preferment. She never liked Great Baddow till she had to leave it. 'Could you but get us A good parsinag I am confident I should live cumfortabielley.' When real troubles failed, which was seldom, Betty had quite a craze for inventing them. Before the birth of her first child she was particularly ingenious; she had secured Sir Ralph as godfather, and she wrote to conjure him to protect her hapless infant, as she foresaw her own death, her husband's second marriage, and the child's cruel sufferings under a stepmother. Sir Ralph declined to pledge himself till the crisis arrived, but he got Peg Elmes to choose some 'Childes Clowtes,' and when the boy had been christened Betty thanks him for a 'silver sugar box & coddel cup.' This child died, and Betty never gave the cruel stepmother a chance, for she survived her husband many years, having brought him two daughters, Margaret and Isabella.

March 25, 1663.

Brother Tom is not to be ignored in this review of the family fortunes, though every member of it would gladly have forgotten him if possible. 'There are severall epitaphs,' he writes to Sir Ralph (anticipating by more than a century Mrs. Malaprop's 'nice derangement'), 'that belong to the word brother, as good, deare, hon^{red} or the like, and in another (which in some may prove the more proper) sense, unkind, unnatureall or the like. Such strainge and unbeseeming titles I forbeare to stile you with, though (haply) I have just cause for it. Sweet Brother, yours most cordially to serve you whilst he is Tho: Verney.'

June 19, 1663.

When he has tired out Sir Ralph he approaches Mun: 'Sir, Kings and Princes in time of need prayeth ayd of their Allies, therefore I conceive it noe dishonour to mee to

crave a supply from my relations. Sir, poverty to mee att this instant is as great an enimy as the Turk is to the Emperor of Germany, and doth dayly get advantages of mee. I have (by severall embassies) treated with my brother, who hath promised mee succour but not sufficient to oppose soe powerfull an enimy, which prompts mee to pray your assistance in some handsome manner, that I may be the better strengthened to encounter my approaching foe and abide him battaile.' It might have gone hardly with the Turks, if the Emperor had had Tom's ready wit and fertility of resource.

In '62 he intends going with the Earl of Windsor to Jamaica; in '63 he is developing 'a potash work'; the next spring he turns up in Ireland, and writes from Bandon
March 26, 1664. Bridge to refute 'some scandal that was fomented against mee in my absence. . . . I would stop all clamorous reports if possibly I could, yet letters may miscarry, I am not within 35 miles of any post-town, besides the casualty of the sea is to be considered. A friend hath undertaken the conveyance of this to London, that hath correspondency in Cornwall & doth weekly return thither or to Plymouth, hides, tallow & the like.' Soon after this there is 'a flying report that Tom is gone for France,' Mrs. Tom 'is in want enough,' and intends to send the baby, born after his departure, 'eyther to the parish att Bristol or to Sir Ralph.' The poor woman comes to see him at Lady Hobart's, and tells him how much she had been 'injured & abused by her husband already; he hath gotten her portion, & so hath made her utterly unable to help the child or feed herself, having nothing but what her own friends in charity bestow upon her.' These friends press Sir Ralph to pay half Tom's annuity direct to his wife, but he has sold it in advance to Sir John Colladon, of the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, who is also clamouring for payment. Sir Ralph can only desire Tom to take measures 'that hee may rest quiet from these importunities.' Tom is tragically indignant
May 31, 1664. and surprised. 'Sir—had I been the worst of brothers, you could not have more estrainged your affections from mee,

give mee (I beseech you) a little liberty to argue the casé with you. Sir, is my concealment occasioned by or for reason of any treason, murder or fellony committed against his majesty, or any of his liege people? You cannot but judge me innocent. Was I the first that left my native being for debt? I beleeve I am not, & I am almost confident I shall not be the last. Truly I am not in love with a prison, neither dare I trust the conscience of any man since brother & brother are growne soe cruell one to another. I hope I shall have noe caus to putt your name in the Role of Unkind Brothers.'

He desires Sir Ralph not to pay Colladon any money, whom he has 'much enraged,' but in the closely written sheet there is not an allusion to his miserable wife and baby, and in June 'it hath pleased God to take away the childe.' Tom's comment on the news is, that he cannot be compelled to give his wife any of his allowance without 'a long & chargeable sute in Chancery, but I am not easily to be found, & death may take away the one as it hath done the other, before I make a returne homewards, I pray forbeare speaking or writeing to mee concerning the party in any of your letters.' Sir Ralph cannot bear to be classed, even by Tom, in a 'Role of Unkind Brothers,' and continues to help him through Mr. Foulkes. Tom, on receiving an addition to his quarterage, sends him thanks 'in number numberless,' and quotes Tacitus 'who in his life of Otho sayd, There is not any one thing which persons of courage and quality doe suffer with more regret than that of poverty'; had he been blessed with an estate he would not have slept till he had repaid all Sir Ralph's benefits. 'My services to you and yours wishing you all health and happiness, as for any other of my relations let them be as they are:

June 24, 1664.

July 10, 1665.

> 'When cloudy stormes are gone and past,
> Then crums of comfort come att last.'

Tom finds his own peculiar 'crums of comfort' during the Great Plague in the chance 'that it may happily touch his chief creditor Colladon, before it yet leaveth.'

Eliza Verney's letters to Sir Ralph are eminently gentle and reasonable; she has exhausted all her own resources and the help given her by 'her uncle, Sir Verney Noell'; she entreats Sir Ralph to persuade her husband to live with her and to accept some employment which her friends will undertake to find him, or to divide his 200*l.* a year with her, which 'the world cannot say is an unreasonable request.'

Tom is, however, quite scandalized that a deserted wife can permit herself to make such unpleasant suggestions to a man of culture and refinement. Nor does Sir Ralph feel able to interfere on behalf of the poor lady, whose petitions are as troublesome as her wrongs are indisputable; and Eliza's piteous appeals and Tom's highly moral begging letters continue to torment him. The more preposterous Tom's request is, the more Scripture he quotes in support of it; he also favours Sir Ralph with an essay upon 'The 3 Degrees of Ingratitude that history maketh mention of,' their characteristics and the penalties imposed upon them by the Egyptians and other ancient nations; Death alone being held fit to expiate the third degree, 'that the earth might quickly rot such an execrable creature as it had brought forth.' The due balancing of his sentences gives him never-failing pleasure, he would have supplied invaluable leading articles to a party paper with a daily demand for cheap abuse of the opposite side.

Aug. 30, 1670.

Tom remained some years in Ireland; at one time he is hiding from creditors, hunted by five couple of beagles and 'the pursuers,' but he proves, as he had boasted, 'not easily to be found, to the great charge of my malitious enemies'; then he is in clover again, having 'in travelling towards Limerick, received an invitation from one Sr George Hamilton, whose lady is Sister to y^e^ duke of Ormond, who knew mee (upon his intimate acquaintance with my brother Sr Ed:) at y^e^ first sight of mee, and treated mee far beyond my desert, and withall informed mee of some land y^t^ was allotted to my deceased brother for his arrears. Sr George telleth mee it cannot be less worth y^n^ 200*l.* per annum, & advised mee to look after it, which I should gladly doe, provided it be with

Aug. 30, 1670.

your good leave and likeing.' 'Sir Daniel Treswell, lately dead, Sir Wm. Flower and Mr. Stephens were the commissioners to allot & sell out Sir Edmund Verney's arrears.'

Sir Ralph will not spend money in investigating Edmund's claims, but if Tom can find any profit accruing for it he shall have a share. It was not the only occasion that Tom traded on his younger brother's fair fame; a letter of Mary Lloyd's to Dr. Denton describes how he turned up some years later in Chester Cathedral.

'Honour'd Uncle,—Sr now I will acquainte you with that as was the greatest of newes to mee: last Sunday being att the quire who did I see but my brother Tom Verney, and could not satisfy my selfe whether I was not mistaken but after long view I found him to be the same; he came from Scotland to a Chester Merchant about some Mynes that he would be a partaker of, and returned on Monday, he is in a good equipage & his man to waite on him, & lookes well and lusty, but the sam Tom V. for a plodding Braine & building Castells in the Ayre: the Gentlemen are very respectfull & oblidging to him, for my Brother Sr Edmd was Governor of the Castle, & they honour & respect the name still.' March 18, 1675.

Whatever time and thought Dr. Denton could spare from his patients were divided between his girl, who kept the house alive with her merry tongue, and a ponderous theological treatise which years of labour had rendered little less dear to him than Nancy herself. This charming and saucy damsel, though she did not marry till her twenty-fourth year, had had many suitors from childhood. In 1662 her father was in treaty with a Mr. Barker; the settlements on each side promised well, the father was 'in hearty good earnest,' but Doctor feared that 'there was a pad in the straw as to the sow,' and being 'in a great quandary' he appealed to Sir Ralph, having 'no one to consult withall but women.'

Nancy was meanwhile making plans on her own account. Strong in her position as the spoilt child of the family, and absolutely confident of being able to do what she chose with

her father and godfather, she received the addresses of a Mr. Ford, who, disregarding all the proprieties of the period, had approached her without her father's knowledge. But for once 'Mistress Monkey' was startled to find she had reached the end of her tether. Neither tears nor coaxing were of the least avail, and a good deal alarmed and sobered, Nancy wrote—not unassisted—the following remarkable epistle to her suitor, a copy of which was kept by the authorities she had defied. The phrase about her father must have been all her own—imagination fails to picture the Doctor, with his dry humour and professional calmness, as 'implacably enraged'—Nancy evidently wanted to cover her retreat.

May 19, 1662. 'Sir,—As I have been obliged to you for your value, and kindnesse to mee, soe I must begg this farther obligation from you, as to lay a side all thoughts of farther kindnesse, or addresses to mee, for that uppon the presumption of my Fathers greate love for mee, I made it knowne to him. . . . but the truth is, instead of procuring his consent I finde him soe implacably enraged & soe absolutely peremtory in the deniall, that there is noe possibility or hopes, ever soe much as to thinke of it. . . . I am very well assured that if I should bee soe unhappy soe to marry, hee would never give mee any thing of his estate liveing or dying, or ever see my face agayne, and therfore being obliged by the Law of God and nature to him, and my owne happinesse to comply with him in this his resolution, I doe earnestly desire you to thinke noe more of it, for I shall not on any account whatsoever, and soe I rest, Your servant, Annie Denton.'

In the winter of 1663, a more interesting alliance was arranged for Mistress Nancy with George Nicholas, a younger son of the old Secretary of State. Sir Edward Nicholas represented the best traditions of the Cavaliers; 'entering official life early, he had risen to its highest grade by proved capacity for business and knowledge of affairs'; [1] he was now an old man, and had just retired from 'his

[1] *Nicholas Papers*, publ. Camden Soc. 1886.

great office,' refusing a peerage, but continuing to serve his Majesty on the Privy Council.

At Christmas time Mrs. Dr. Denton was already busily planning the wedding feast. Was there a fat doe at Claydon, or could one be fatted at short notice? she inquired of Sir Ralph. Margaret Elmes, whose taste and cleverness are universally acknowledged, has come up to Covent Garden, and the ladies 'are now every day mity busy about the wedding clothes, 100*l.* is already gon with them and a considerable som moare will be laid out about them, it cannot be tolorably dun with less.'

Dame Jane Nicholas, to whom Nancy has already lost her heart, pays a ceremonious visit to good vulgar Mrs. Denton. Aunt Isham hears 'that the man is without Excepchon, & that is the thinge I am pleased att for all the forting is loe, one is not always hapye with a greate fortine.' But though the women's part of the business was in so forward a state, there were rumours that the Doctor was yet to satisfy about the settlements.

The Nicholas family suffered severely in the distracted times; the bridegroom's grandfather had been 'plundered thrice in one week'; his uncle, the Dean of Bristol, was turned out of house and home; 'his wife, poor gentlewoman, pitied by all, tho' not holpen by any,' was reduced to sending her only maid into the market-place, 'selling rosemary & bayes to buy bread'; nor did Mr. Secretary Nicholas fare better. Since the Restoration the family fortunes had revived a little; the young Sir John Nicholas held his father's old post of Clerk to the Privy Council, but no large portion could be given to George, the youngest of three sons. Sir John Nicholas sought an introduction to Sir Ralph from a mutual friend Charles Whitaker, that he might not, on his brother's behalf, 'come solitary in the quality of a stranger, which hee is purely, to his great unhappinesse.' Sir Edward Nicholas eventually surrendered to his son George the benefit 'of one 4th part of the office of Surveyor Generall of his Majestie's Customs, as well as his estate, title and interest in the parsonage of Wherwell in the County of Southampton,' and

Dr. Denton settled land on his daughter yielding a clear rental of 100*l.* a year. The matter was apparently settled, when an agitated note from Nancy reached her kind old friend. 'If you could posibly for your business com hethar, you wold oblige me mutch, for now my father is as hard to be parswaded to anything as my mother is.' Sir Ralph did not fail his young kinswoman, the marriage took place two days later, and after the honeymoon the bride writes to him in a rapture of gratitude: 'Deare Parant, this titell coms not to you unmerited for I know of no one that has more wright to it then yourselfe. . . . God Almighty reward you for your peas-making betwen fathar & child for next under God you ware the means of it. . . . I shall beg your pardon & ever remain Your dutyfull child & best girlle still, Anne Nicholas.'

Feb. 16, 1664.

Sir Edward and Lady Nicholas offered bed and board to the young couple for the first months, and Nancy speaks of them with extreme affection. The Doctor is more than reconciled to his son-in-law, and in the autumn they 'are gon to the Fens and so intend for a ramble.' 'My fathar and Nike are both run a wae I think,' Nancy writes to Sir Ralph, 'for they are not com home yet but they have almost destroied your manor of Cladon, & Nobill Soul [Edmund] has uesed them as I hear very kindly.' Her health requires care, and old Aunt Abercromby 'has mounted the gard a fortnight sence. My mother is in ill cais, seing my fathar stais so long a wae, & sais she shall nevar be well, but I hope in that she speaks not truth. The town is empty & barin of newes & I as dull for want of my Nike. . . . There is a Giant come out of Holond and he is 9 fut hy & 2 inches. I beleve my poor Nike wold stand betwen his legs, he has sutch long ones. . . . I will now tiar you no longer, only ask you an evning blesing, & rest as you shall ever find me your truly loving cosin and best Child.'

In Christmas week both families rejoice over the birth of 'a lusty boy,' christened Denton, who is prosperous, 'even to a mirekell,' according to his mother's account. 'My boy is now undressing by me,' she writes, when the treasure is

just able to toddle, 'and is sutch prety companey that he hindars me so, I cannot write what I wold.'

The other children born to George and Nancy Nicholas were Jane (b. 1666), a son who died an infant in 1670, and John (b. 1674). Denton Nicholas was at Trinity College, Oxford, with Mun Verney's eldest son; he became a Doctor, and died in 1714. Jane, called after her Nicholas grandmother, was Sir Ralph's godchild. Nancy writes to thank him for 'making a cristian of my litill girle who I will indevar to make as duty full to you as myselfe am.' May 10, 1666.

Jane's marriage to Sir John Abdy is told in a later chapter; when her daughter was born, nothing would satisfy Lady Abdy but that Sir Ralph should stand sponsor, as he had stood for the baby's mother and grandmother. He was flattered by the request, being wont to boast that his godchildren 'were alwaies the best of the Brood, witnesse Nancy Nicholas.' Dr. Denton lived to be godfather to his great-grandson, afterwards Sir Robert Abdy. Nancy's youngest son Jack had Bishop Patrick for his godfather; he was educated at Harrow, took Holy Orders in 1701, married in 1706 'the dau. of Parson Dod,' and left a son George. These grandchildren and great-grandchildren were the joy of the Doctor's old age, and after his wife's death in 1675 the Nicholases made their home with him in Covent Garden.

Other matrons gauged rather enviously Mistress Nancy's popularity by the amount of venison she received in presents. 'I dar say,' one lady remarks, 'fue as has parkes of ther one, has so much spent in ther house as my Cossen Nicholas eats, for as she tells me, she eats it as others eat beaf, three tims A week; baked, boyled, rosted and potted.' Sir Ralph sends her snipes and larks. 'My Nike,' she writes, 'was y^{t} afternoon gone to bed wth a cold and the exstrordinary goodnes of ye fouls tempted him up again to supper. . . . I never did see firmer or fresher or fatter.' She is delightfully young as a mother and grandmother, and expects to go everywhere and see everything. 'Nancy hath beene at the Tower,' the old Doctor writes after one of these excursions,

'& was afraid when she saw the men in armour, & durst not see the Lyons.' An introduction to her brings a girl into the best society. 'Sr Petter Lily told me tonight yt now his Dafter was at home wth him, & he beged ye favor of me to lett her come offten to my house yt se might se something of ye world wh I was very redy to imbrace & told him I would also bring her a Quainted wth Lady Gardiner's Daughters. . . . I am as tru freind to ym young creturs as aney in ye world can be so I have spoken to Cous. Cary to cary yt young lass to ye Park & so this will make an a Quaintance wth ye father & the young women.'

April 23, 1680.

But to return to the year 1664, Nancy's marriage being off his mind, the Doctor gave himself up with keen relish to his defence of Protestant opinions, and this same year his 'Horæ Subsecivæ' was published. He thus sets forth his intentions—'A sad fate attends both him that writes and him that writes not. He that Prints exposeth himself to be wounded by others, and he that forbears to Speak or Print in the cause of God, provokes God to disown him.' The Doctor has persuaded himself that in a century of controversy, the 'just defence of England against Rome, the Innocency of our Princes and their Government and of the Protestant religion, has never yet been particularly handled in any particular Tract that ever yet I could see and hear of, which I hope may excuse me A tanto if not A toto.' Arming himself with a goodly store of biblical texts and classical quotations, the Doctor descended into the dusty arena, belabouring Popes, Cardinals, and Councils, 'rightly expounding things generally misunderstood,' and in the heat of the fray losing the sense of humour, the delicate irony, and the felicity of expression which make his private letters so delightful. He published a translation of 'Fra Paolo, dedicated to his Majestye' which he had 'the bold imprudence to present to the K. & the Duke.' He continued to prescribe for 'Ecclesiastics of all Perswasions,' to purge out heresies, and to devise robust tonics for weak faith, feeling no scruple in dogmatising about the soul's ailments, though he

had often confessed to the difficulty of treating those of the body.'

In the beginning of 1665 Dorothy Leeke's health began to fail. She was an instance of an old maid who is the good angel of a whole family. Her warm heart, unaffected piety, and cheerful spirits, unbroken by poverty and dependence, made her welcome in every household.

Lady Gawdy treated her as a sister, and whenever she could be spared from Croweshall, she was overwhelmed with invitations from friends and relations, but divided her time chiefly between Chancery Lane and Claydon. She never lost an opportunity of serving Sir Ralph, and when Sir Charles Gawdy sends over a groom to Claydon, he is sure to have a merry letter from Doll in his wallet. 'Dear Sir Ralph,' she writes on one of these occasions, 'you beleve your self now at liberty & fre from all troublesome parsons, but this is to let you see that you ought not to be very Confident of any thing in this world, for in all places I shall find you out to torment you, yet my thoughts are so free from malis, that I wish this may only hinder you of a quater of an hower slep in the Evining; not when you are in your park amoungst your prety dear, Nancy atinding you; nor in your fine wood & walks, for ther I will a low you to think of the last beauty you saw at Loundon. By this time I beleve you wish to come to the bisnis that caused this leter, but to tell you the truth I have none, nor anything more to say, but that I could be contented to be in Sir Charlses boy's plac the time he is at Cladon, if you wold admit me into the parlur, but then or hear I can never be other then your most faithfull servant to Comand.'

Edmund welcomed her very cordially at East Claydon, where she took Luce Sheppard's place in helping Mary with housekeeping, and in encouraging her to occupy herself in various directions. At the White House she is to 'lay over the Hall because the inward room is so convenient for her Maid,' 'dans la chambre sur la sale, mais non pas dans une sale chambre,' Mun writes; 'she eats no flesh on Fridays nor

willingly on Wednesdays in Lent.' Mary is hard at work embroidering the hangings for a big green bed; Doll busies herself with sorting silks and crewels; she sends patterns to Sir Ralph and Aunt Elmes to be matched in London, and helps Mary with the intricacies of the 'rosemary stitch.' Mary likes her task very well, but Doll considers 'ther is too much work in it, and ther is sertan birds and flyes and other crepers which I know not, and frute which I do not much like, but it is a very fine thing, tho they be Left out. Gamboy, Marigold and Vaunter [Sir Ralph's hounds] made us a visit which was all the strangers we had.'

In the midst of her unselfish ministrations, this kind woman first began to suspect the real nature of the 'dangerous corroding disease' from which she was suffering. The shock and the increasing pain upset her for the time, the more so as 'Doctor's physicke' failed entirely to check its progress. He is 'much concerned for Doll who, I feare, hath a very ill back & will be like her mother.' She rallied bravely from her depression, kept her sufferings to herself as far as might be, and as the year wore on, private anxieties were merged in a great public calamity.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PLAGUE AND THE FIRE.

1665–1666.

THE plague so often referred to in the earlier Verney letters had been for many years in abeyance. 'During the Civil Wars London had been the safest place of residence and had grown fast while other towns were languishing.'

The fresh outbreak in the spring of 1665 is noticed at first merely in joke: 'Tis plaguey newes that the plague has come to Southwark.' In May Sir Ralph writes from Chancery Lane: 'Tis an ill time to put out money for the feare of the Plague makes many willing to take their Estates out of the Goldsmiths' hands, & the King's greate want of money makes many very unwilling to lend any money to these that advance greate summs for him. Mr Kempe came to my Lodging on purpose to desire mee to helpe him to dispose 3 or 400*l.* on good security. . . . Coals [which come by sea from Newcastle] are not only excessive deare, but are not to be had, wee heare of a hope for greate Fleets hereafter, but we doubt tis but discourse.' He is thankful to have the Claydon woods to fall back upon, but must cut down more timber than he desires. It is a hot and dry season, and Mun must see that the young mulberry trees are well watered. May 18, 1665.

The plague is spreading; in June 'tis suspected to bee at the Black Swan in Holborn where the Alisbery & other coaches stand'; a little later all the carriers are stopped, 'the sickness is not far from Lombard St. & if it should visitt the Goldsmiths twill be hazardous to have too great a stock there.' Sir Roger Burgoyne, whose children are at

Clapham, is afraid either to leave them there or to have them home; but eventually they return to Warwickshire, Sir Ralph entertaining them by the way; Sir Roger has received them 'safe & sound, but so full of the good dainties that Claydon afforded, that the best we have at Wroxall will hardly goe down with them.'

June 19, 1665. Aunt Isham exhorts Sir Ralph while he is in town 'to ware a quill as is filed up with quicsilver and sealed up with hard waxe & soed up in a silke thinge with a string to ware about your neck, this is as sartine as any thinge is to keep one from taking of the Plage if one is in the house with them . . . iff you let your Horse ware it about his head he will never have the desese. This is a slite bisnes if itt does presarve one from this sad desese, as the Lady Bemone tells me she hath worn it herselfe & intends to have some for all her sarvants, & Sir Tho: Bemone hunted with his nabores Hounes as thare Horses ware infected & his horse nevor choed the desese . . . heare is talkes of one as came from London within 5 miles is dead of a swelling under his yeare.'

June 27, 1665. 'The quicksilver must be corked up fust & then seled, itt tis nitty for one's teth & eies, so without one is in danger one would not ware itt.' She recommends him to have 'Lente figges in a readines if any of your family shoulge have a swelling, Rost some & Mashe them togeather & then mix some Meatreadat[1] amonst them nothing will soner brake & hele a sore then this, so thay keepe them selves warme.'

She has also a cure for the falling sickness given her by 'Lady Shinjane as a thing as never failed. Take the misseltoe wh^ch growes sometimes upon the top, & sometimes among the branches of an old oake tree, dry it & beat it to powder & Give as much of it as will lye upon a sixpence, 3 mornings together.' Cary Gardiner has her nostrum, 'a blak meddicin' so potent she would certainly cure the plague could she get enough of it. The official remedy is garlic with butter and a clove or two; and for 'the richer sort,' the College of Physicians prescribe a costly concoction of 'Powder of hartshorn, pearls, coral, tormentil, hyacinth-

[1] Mithridate mustard, *Phlaspe arvense*.

stone, onyx-stone & East Hunicorne's horn.' Hampshire is much infected; the Duke of York's children are at Wilton, and expect him to join them there.

The men of Sir Ralph's generation still considered smoking a nasty habit, and Sir Roger Burgoyne, in planning a new wing at Wroxall, designs a door into the Oval Garden 'to make it serve instead of a withdrawing room for tobacconists & such goodfellows & to free the house from all such unwellcome parfumes.' But it was rapidly becoming fashionable, as a preservative against infection, and the Eton boys were ordered to smoke in school daily.

Sir Ralph has to confess 'the Sicknesse is strangely increased & that several houses are shut upp in Chancery lane & severall neare it, but I trust God in Mercy will preserve mee & this family from that violent disease. I have been ill of late, soe that the Dr. hath purged & blooded me, & now I hope to get home within few days.' Hospitable as he is, he is disinclined to share his home with some relations for an indefinite period, which rouses Penelope and Henry to wrath. She protests that she would be content with 'a thached hous in your town': and he writes, 'If you had had but a sparke of love for me, you would not a putt these greate inconveniences on mee . . . all people are so fearefull of the sickness that they will recive non, much less people thay know not. If my sister Gardiner considers not our condition noe better then you have don, then I shall enter your house on our returne & putt a redd cross on the dore and write & cry Lord a marcy on us.' Henry's 'errand' is said to be to 'a cocking at Northampton.' July 4, 1665.

Mrs. Elmes, always nervous about health, has fled to Scarborough and thence to Knaresborough Spa, in company with the Ishams, the Sherards, and 'my shee-cousin Danby.' She writes to her brother: 'The first inst we arived att the nasty Spaw, and have now began to drinke the horid sulfer watter, which all thowgh as bad as is posable to be immajaned, yet in my judgment plesant, to all the doings we have within doorse, the house and all that is in it being horidly nasty and crowded up with all sorte of company, June 4, 1665.

which we Eate with in a roome as the spiders are redy to drope into my mouthe, and sure hathe nethor been well cleaned nor ared this doseuen yerese, it makes me much moare sicke then the nasty water. Did you but see me you wolde laughe hartily att me, but I say little of it to whot I thinke, then to mend all this, the goe to supper att halfe an ower after six, soe I save a bitt and supp bye myselfe 2 owers after them, which is the plesantest thinge I doe heare. We are 16 of my uncle and aunts family, and all in pention, att 10*s.* a weeke for owerselves, and 7*s.* for owr servants with lodgens in ; I have not hard from you I know not when, soe in my openyone live heare as if theare ware nobody Elce in the worlde, but just whot I see of these bumkins. We met the Lady Comton and her sister the Lady Ann Comton att Donkister, hoe asured me the blackimorse head in Chancery iaine was shutt up of the plaige.' The health resorts leave much to be desired. Lodgings at Astropp Wells which Mrs. Elmes also visited were as objectionable ; 'instead of the sweet woodbines and jesamine att Claydon, I have the stincke of sower whay & cheese, which is so strong in my chamber I know not whot to doe . . . not a coale of fyer can I get to burne one smale bitt of perfewme, fast I must the night, heare not being athor master or maide att home, candle there is not a bit, soe I have sent to borrow one.' The accommodation at Buxton seems to have been no better.

June 5, 1665. Sir Ralph had been meditating how to give his sister 'some imployment at Knarsborough-Spa, and can finde out none but to search for Haire to make me Wiggs & buy your coach full, if you can, for all sorts of comodities are cheape in Yorksheire & generally very good too . . . Peg Gardner saw your Lord & Master with some gentlemen in the Parke, where I doubt not your company was much desired. I am told Sir John Dynham's Lady & fine Mrs. Middleton are sworne the Queene's Dressers, if it be soe, she hath six, had you been heare perhaps you might have been the 7th . . . Give my Aunt humble thanks for her letter [inviting Sir Ralph to join them], truly now you are with her, I thought

one of the Brood had been enough at a time, but if the waters make her soe well as to support Two, twill bee a very greate recovery, that gives both strength to her, & happinesse to me.' Peg can hear of no hair at any barber's; she writes from York, lodgings are dearer than in London: 'this town doth almost swarme, ther being soldiers, soe men we want not . . . nethor my aunt nor selfe have had any violent paine in our heads so I hope the waters have dun us good, but now we are beginning our gretist punnishments which is our phesicke.' Sir Ralph is glad she is 'in soe good company at Yorke for it seems there is greate store of gentlemen there, and we know you ladies love them, noe lesse then we doe the ladies. . . . I beleeve you have had abundance of Cherries, Reygrasse & all such kinde of Dainties; much good may they doe you, but I pray eate sparingly.' June 19, 1665.

Aunt Isham writes from Stapleford, my Lord Sherard's house: 'We are as merry heare as one can be so far from London & the Lady Sherard with myself hath beaten one Lady Beamon out of the Pitt att ha'penny Gleeke you may think how itt hath weared me play this small game.'

The rest of the party are at Thorpe with Margaret Danby (*née* Eure). Her married life was not a happy one; her husband suffered from the masterful temper against which her mother used to rebel, and she was constantly at war with her sister and Mr. Palmes. Peg Elmes complains to Sir Ralph that when she reached their house 'the Chiefe Bird was flone 2 dayes befoare, he knowing of our coming, his brother and sister he tooke away with him, soe lefte none heare but the childeren, his wife being with us most of the time we have been in these parts. This showse whot good well umored creturs you men are. . . . This plaise will cost me somthing, heare being a man Cooke, butler and all ofisers ansorable.' Peg went home with Mrs. Sherard to Whitsondine, passing through York. No inns were considered safe in the plague time, and 'to lye att Gentlemens Houses as we go will cost me I know not whot,' writes this July 18, 1665

careful lady. Mrs. Sherard is said to look seven years younger after her course of waters.

Betty Adams at Great Baddow contributes her tale of the plague in Essex; Chelmsford is infected by the many 'hecklers' that come thither from town: 'my Cusan Pascal saies when aney great sicknes is at London it is yousaley ther, it is all redy much visited with the smol pox, that desese has much rained in this Contri since I cam hether, my next nebors daur died of it . . . our carier has left going to London, but the post I thinck goes still.'

Aug. 27, 1665. In August, Buckingham 'is soe sorely afflicted with Small Pox, suspected to be worse for there are blew spots with it,' that Sir Ralph is advised to send to Bicester Market; Edmund cannot deal with his butcher at Winslow because the butcher's man, Hogson, comes from an infected house; Squire Duncombe 'pensa mourir ce matin, et cette après diner il alla au Cabaret se boire bien.' Hogson's sister dies, and the plague spreads to their relations at East Claydon, where Edward Cox and all his children die of it, the wife alone recovering, and falling ill later, after the birth of her posthumous child, of what is again supposed to be the plague. Edmund remains at his post, and Sir Ralph returns to Claydon as soon as the plague breaks out, that they may do what they can for the villages; it does not spread in the Claydons, but through that terrible September when the mortality in London reached its highest point, there were plague-cases at Stowe, Stony Stratford, Fenny Stratford (where the market was closed and the highway diverted), Bletchley, Lavendon (where fifty died in the village), Winslow, Hardwick, Aylesbury, Wendover, Marlow, Wycombe, etc. A wandering dog was said to have carried the plague from Wendover to Ellesborough, where the Rector, Thomas Emery, died of it. A pest-house was set up in the fields outside Aylesbury, whose wretched inmates burnt 'the sheep-racks & gates' of the adjoining farm, being forbidden to wander in search of fuel. The Aylesbury Gaol, 'so decayed that it was scarce fit for a dog-house,' had long been a centre of infection; at this time

it was crammed full of miserable Quakers and Nonconformists.

Men hardly dared to leave their homes for fear of bringing 'the sickness' back with them. Thomas Stafford speaks 'of the sad confinement of all fathers of families in this time of contagion.' In Hampshire, Cary deplores the fate of a poor family three miles from her own door, where the plague was brought down by a brother from London, and all died of it; for two months past there have been fifty deaths a week in Southampton.

Court, Parliament, and the Law fled to Oxford; the Chancellor with my Lord Manchester is taking orders for the King's accommodation there. Sir Nathaniel Hobart writes to Sir Ralph: 'If the Plague continue at the rate I feare it will, what a madnes would it bee to have such a confluence of people as the Terme must bring into such a place as Oxford, but in regard we are uncertaine what will bee resolvde on by them that sit at the Sterne, our humble request is that you will bee pleased to use your interest to procure us lodgings, a lower and an upper chamber would bee sufficient. . . . S^r^ if they can be had neere the Schooles where they say the Court will bee kept it will bee the better but beggars must bee noe chusers.' Sept. 12, 1665.

Lady Hobart is ready to disregard all sanitary considerations if she can but be with her 'Nat.' 'There goo non but my husband self and Mayd and man and it may be my boy. One rom for us and a plas for my hus to sit in, but tou roms shall sarve all we will mack shift . . . my son dislicks that the new Colag shall send to ofer him logins for he will mack no requist to them . . . my husband writ a leter to docker Bate to see if he cold help him, but my son says the toun Logins are so dear that thar is no deling with them. I hop we shall see you to morow or the next day for I have no pashans to be so long from you, I wold be glad to have a lon rom for my husband any shall content us.' Sept. 12, 1665.

Sir Ralph lays the case before his Oxford friends. The Principal of Brasenose, Dr. Thomas Yate, hospitably responds: 'Sir,—I have had Sr Nath. Hobart's name in my Sept. 21, 1665.

list, ever since mr Cary told me your desires for him, and I hope I shalbe able to serve him as you desire, with a lodging chamber and another chamber below staires, if those that now take upon them all power here doe not attempt to doe more then hithertoo they have done, Mr Attorney Gen: lies in my lodgings, and hath desired me to provide for his two sonnes [one or both members of Parliament] some where also in our Coll: I have designed where to lodge Sr Nath. and I hope I shall hold it, I will not easily be beaten off, though I had a ticket this morning from my Lord Chancellor's Secretary to desire I would provide for 4 knightes but I hope it is but a thing he assumes, and that it is not by my Lord's Command. But be assured I will use all the power and friendes I have, but I will have a lodging such as you desire for him, but what his servantes will doe I cannot at present tell you, though I will thinke myselfe obliged to do all I can in some place or other to fitt them also. Wee heare the Duke of Yorke wilbe here to morrow, his children came on Thursday last, and though some cariages of the kinges are come already to Christ Church, wee are not assured the king wilbe here on Tuesday next, but most say that Ev^{g} he wilbe here. The great trouble Sr Nath. Hobart wilbe put into wilbe for his diet in a Colledge if his lady comes along with him: otherwise those that are members of the House have names in the Booke, and dine and sup in our Hall, wch they seeme to be pleased with, but wherein I may serve them therein also I shall, and if Sr Nath. Hobart could give me notice 2 or 3 dayes before his coming I might be enabled to serve him the better, that he might not be to seeke when he comes, as many maybe (for the Court hath so enlarged themselves having Christ Church, Merton Coll: Corpus Xti Coll. Pembroke Coll. & Oriol Coll. assigned wholely and solely for them) that it putts many to straites and many to seeke, for if I provide for S^{r} Nath (as I hope to do) in our Coll. I must remove a fellow and some furniture and they must have some tyme to doe it. I heare my Lo: Chancelo^{r} wilbe here on Munday, and in all likelyhood mr Cary may be here then

also and wee will joyne all our force together to serve you. My Wife presentes her most humble service and thankes to you, and will not be wanting in any thing shee is able to serve you herein.' Sir Nathaniel writes—'For my diet I shall be glad to eat in the Hall if that may bee allowed, for my wife, though she would be glad to eat with the Dr's wife, and her mayde at her servants table, yet least that should be an inconvenience to her, she saies (and you know she can shift) she will do it privately in her chamber.'

'I have sent you both this weeks gazettes,' he writes again, 'and have nothing to add but a comicall incounter betwixt my lord of Lyncolne and Secretary Maurice at the Secretaries owne table, the dispute grew about the Antiquity of the two Universities. My Lord of Lincolne (as he had reason) was for Cambridge, Mr Sec: for Oxford, Sir Robert Wiseman who was present protested he thought they would have gone to Cuffs, certainly it would have bin an excellent decision of that great controversy had they engagde and Cambridge in all likelihood had got the Victory, for my Lord, who you know is a little out of temper by fitts, would have made madd worke with my little Statesman.' Nov. 24, 1665.

Mrs. Sherard writes from Whitsondine: 'I am in a daily fere, we had a market town about 4 miles of us that bureyed about 9 or 10 in a hut, just as I cam ought of the North, and wee hoped all would have bin well, but about 3 wickes since it brake out in that town affresh and non knows how it cam. A child of 3 years old dyed first, and 5 more since in that same hous, and it was in one hous more which sold all sortes of ale; he conselid his dead wife tow dayes, and ther was 40 in the hous after shee dyed both Jhentry and others, my L[d] Sherard told me that non in his hundred coold say thay wair free, & severall of that town stole into our town & brought in ther Goodes in the night. My hus. hearing of it armd himselfe with his pistoles & went about 9 at night & saw them all shut up with thos as resived them; it is a great blesing that all plasis air not infeckted considoring the carlysness of the common sort of people.' Six months later the plague is still in 'the market town' and likely to Oct. 8, 1665.

last through another summer, 'the town being full of poore & very unruly.' Sir Justinian Isham is driven from home, the sickness being all round his house in Northamptonshire.

Oct. 23, 1665. Betty's fears are confirmed: 'The sickness is at Chelmsford a litel mile from me which coseis me to be veri fearfull, so many of our town goes that way to Markit, thos which bee shut up would run About did not sum stand with guns redy to shoot them if they stur.' By December there are fifty houses infected; she is the 'joyful mother of a fin girl,' thankful for her recovery 'in times when wee hardly dare visit one another if sick.' As soon as she can sit up in her bed she writes to Sir Ralph a list of benefices he might apply for. As Tom had found balm in the thought that creditors were not plague-proof; and Jeffereys, a lad in his teens, profiting by the havoc the plague had wrought among the lawyers, 'put a gown on his back & began to plead' before he had been called to the bar; so Betty reading with some complacency of the 'many ministers dead in thees times of Mortolity,' thinks it strange indeed if her brother cannot get them one of the vacant livings; 'the taxis here is so hi & the plas so smol that we know not whot to doo, this with my praiers to God for our hapy meeting I rest that am Yr most affect Sister & sarvant.'

Oxford, crowded as it is in every corner, is not exempt—'the porter of Lincoln is dead of the plague,' and other cases are mentioned; the saintly Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Earle, is dying in University College, but of what illness does not appear.

Nov. 1665. Dr. Yate continues to be overdone with guests; Major Salway, Governor of Ireland under Cromwell and later Ambassador to Constantinople, is coming to the College. The Hobarts seem to have found lodgings in the town, as poor Doll Leeke is with them. Sir Ralph sends her a bed and bedding from Claydon; and a warming-pan, wrapped up in a feather bed, is to arrive on horseback. Sir Roger Burgoyne writes of a 'man of miracles, the 7th brother who opens the eyes of those that have been

blind many yeares, and cures cancers in breast which he seldom failes in,' but Doll is happily left in peace. She returns to Lady Smith's house at Radcliffe and gets 'some ingredients for a dyet drink from Mr. Gape, and some frog water from Oxford.' She is still well enough to write to Sir Ralph: 'I thank God I got very well home but weary and much worst then when I went, my pains are like to increas every day, I pray I may get pacienc to induer and that my time may not be long. . . . I have 3 score of suger for you but can get no basket to put it in. Sir, so long as I have ability you shall have a very faithful servant of your D. Leeke.' A week later she writes again: Sir W. Smith 'would drive me over to Claydon but I grow every day more unfit for such a Jorney . . . . all that I shall beg of you or any of my friends is to pray for me that it will pleas God to make me fit for him, the great blessing I can expect is to dy, O that I wear so happy that the time wear come, but I must wait his Leasure that must mak me fit for it.' Sir Ralph writes of 'my deare Cozen Leeke' to Lady Gawdy, who is tenderly anxious about her—'though she walkes about the house, yet I may say many and greate Paines and a lingering Death with a thousand other inconveniences are visible uppon her. . . . I beleeve she conceales the worst from you, well knowing how sensible your Ladyshipp would bee of her distresses.'

Nov. 1665

Nov. 8, 1665.

Dec. 2, 1665.

Sir Ralph and Edmund rode over constantly from Claydon, and were lovingly on the watch to devise any alleviations. Lady Hobart came down again from town: 'I would render my life to do her good, never any Sister had such a Los as she will be to me.' Dr. Denton sees her at intervals and she has a crowd of visitors; Mun goes over with a party just before Christmas: 'pour ce qui touche ma surpassante Cousine Leake, ma plume ne peut vous racontez sans larmes ceque mes yeux on vu, une ame si pure et si sainte dans un corps tellement corrompu.'

A few days later Mun rides over again to Radcliffe and returns by moonlight, deeply impressed with the 'magnanimity & truly Christian patience' with which the sufferer

bears herself. Sir Ralph is at Wroxall, where Sir Roger had promised to use him like a friend; 'Hempen sheets, Bull Beefe & the worst room in my house shall be all at your service, my wife will provide the softest cushions she can get for your lean bones, I know you love an easy seat as well as hard fare.' He has hurt his shin and tries to 'favour it,' having found 'that rest is a great advantage to it,' but he is far too active to be prudent long, and Doll is asking daily for his return. Sir Ralph does not think her so near death as Lady Hobart does; 'this terrible disease commonly takes time & leasure in its execution. You see the Queen Mother of France lives still, though her very Doctors have oft expected her departure.' Mr. Butterfield finds 'Mistress Leake wearing a pace but not so fast as she desires.' Peg Elmes hopes 'God may comfort her & keep us from the like,' and deplores in the same breath the death of Sir Ralph's ass, whose milk she designed to share with him. She is staying with Sir Thomas Cave at Stanford, paying for her diet. Penelope Lady Cave (*née* Wenman) dies in February, and there is instantly a panic in the country that it is 'the plague, or spotted fever at the best.' Lady Elmes and Arabella Denton have nursed her to the last, and Sir Thomas gives them mourning. Sir Ralph says that malignant fevers are always worse in a time of plague, and advises his sister 'to finde out some private place to air yourself a little to take off all apprehension' before coming to Claydon, though it seems that the illness is 'only Scarlet Fever.' 'The Plague is newly brake out againe at Quainton & 2 more dead of it already this week . . . I pray bee not affrayd, for feare brings many diseases.' Doll signs a paper on the 14th of February leaving her little savings to her sister, and on the 22nd Sir Ralph, just starting for the Assizes, writes a hurried line to Henry: 'My deare Cozen Leake is gon to Heaven, & is, & will bee very much missed by all that knew her.' 'As fit for Heaven as Cousin Leake' is the family phrase for a saintly woman.

Jan. 15, 1666.

Feb. 10, 1666.

Feb. 22, 1666.

Mrs. Elmes remains at Stanford helping Sir Thomas Cave with his motherless children: 'he is continewally a

weeping as if it were all most the first day he had lost his lady'; she cannot but contrast his conduct with that of her own Sir Thomas, 'who is displeased att my being here, & trewly I am confident will bee soe with all I doe or where ere I am, till he heares I am in my grave, which newse I hope in God he shall not have a longe time.' Sir Greville Verney is staying in the house, on the occasion of one of her visits. 'I cannot say he courts any here, so as to make me thinke he will make his choyse here,' she writes to Sir Ralph, 'tho' he doth make a party color Cortshipp to one moare then the rest; which you men are not much to be minded for.'

Pepys could rejoice with the opening of the New Year at the plague's decrease in town; shops were opening, porters bowing and beggars begging at the sight of a nobleman's coach come to town again; but in many parts of the country the sickness raged all that year. Cary writes that Win- June 25, 1666
chester was 'never near so bad as now, ther died 11 in one day, for all the town is emptied so much into the countary a bout; poor Milly, the pretty made as sarved my daugter Grove, is shut up and her husband and 3 children, last tusday her made dying of the plaug, so my littell scolar is like to continue with mee who presents his humble sarvis to you tis a sad los of timé to him. In Southampton, I thinke, have died almost 1000.' Winton College remains closed for above half a year; 'so that for that time,' writes John Stewkeley, 'I have been Jack's Tutor; after Xmas the school opens again, if the sickness doe not breake out again which is much feared, by reason that one fell down dead there last week, as he was going to grinde mault.'

Bad news of the war with the Dutch contributes to the general depression: 'Hear is nothing bot sending soulgars June 15, 1666.
to sea,' Cary writes, 'and lending mony to the King, and I wish wee ware in so good a condistion as that wee could doe it as will as others to sarve the King.'

There are riots amongst the plague-stricken wretches who are shut up in their houses; the plague is still 'so July 23, 1666.
violent in Winton and Petersfeld and Porchmouth as tis

sad to relate, and last week the sick brok out, not for want, as wee are told, but to visitt the houses of the better sort and opened the jale and 17 prisoners escaped, bot 15 are taken againe, the royal white trained bands ware left in town and soprist thim with the lose of one man and 3 hort, of that party as did mutiny, wee are afrad of all wee meet thay ramble a bout . . . our assises is kept next wensday at Andovour so the Sherrif is come into this sickly countary how long to stay I know not, I pray God send peac and helth.'

Aug. 13, 1666. In August 'Winton is as bad as evar considering the small nomber remaining in it and so is Petersfeild, bot Porchmouth though many sick in it tis not now so mortall, wee take the same way in this countary as you due by a weeckly tax, and so wee did last yeare besids what is sent in by privet gentlemen which hath bin very considerable tho' all to littell for wee heare thay are in want still.' 'We have had a year of scarcity.'

A more terrible blow than any that had yet fallen was to 'crush the weak fortunes' of the Stewkeleys, and of many other members of the family, whose incomes depended on London property. Lady Hobart, in her beautiful house in Chancery Lane, writes in an agony of fear, while the Great Fire is blazing: 'O dear Sir Raph,—I am sory to be the mesinger of so dismall news, for por London is almost burnt down. It began on Saterday night [she is writing Monday morning] & has burnt ever senc and is at this tim more fears then ever, it did begin in pudding lan at a backers, whar a Duch rog [rogue] lay, & burnt to the bridge & all fish street and all crasus stret & Lumber Stret and the old exchang & canan stret & so all that way to the reaver & bilingsgat sid, & now tis com to chep sid & banescasell [Baynard's Castle, to the east of Blackfriars Bridge] & tis thought flet stret will be burnt by tomorow, thar is nothing left in any hous thar, nor in the Tempell, thar was never so sad a sight, nor so dolefull a cry hard, my hart is not abell to expres the tenth nay the thousenth part of it, thar is all the carts within ten mils round, & cars & drays

Sept. 8, 1666.

run about night & day, & thousens of men & women carring burdens. Tis the Duch fire, thar was one tacken in Westminster seting his outhous on fier & thay have atempted to fier many plases & thar is a bundanc tacken with granades & pouder, Casell yard was set on fier, i am all most out of my wits, we have packed up all our goods & cannot get a cart for money, thay give 5 & 10 pound for carts. I have sent for carts to my Lady Glaskock if I can get them, but I fear I shall los all I have and must run away. O pray for us for now the crys macks me I know not what to say, O pety me. I will breck open the closet and look to all your things as well as i can, I hop if it com to us it will be Thursday but it runs fearsly, O i shall los all i have, we have sent to se for carts to send to higat & cannot get one [for] twenty pound to go out of town. Viner and Backwall have saved all, and so has all Lumbert Stret, all Polschurchyard cloth is saved. Mr. Glaskock is com & says we shall have carts tomorrow. God bles us & send us a good meting.' Two days later she writes again: 'O dear Sir, we are all undon, the holl sety is down, my hous is not yet burnt, but all I have turn'd out, & som saf & the rest in the felds.' Among the distracting rumours in the crowd a report ran that the French and Dutch who had planned the fire would sack the town, and with this 'dreadful outcry we did look to be kiled every hour, I have all most lost my wits & my por gearls. It has cost me 20*l.* to remove my goods in porters & carts if you can sen me som money you will hyly obleg me, you shall have it again at Micklmas dear sir send me but 10*l.* & love & pety y^r^ Ser^t^ A. H.' Sept. 5, 1666.

Lady Hobart has lost her wits in good company; the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Bludworth, running about 'with a handkercher about his neck, cried out like a fainting woman to the king's message—Lord what can I do, I am spent, people will not obey me, I have been pulling down houses, but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it!' It was evident if the fire did not reach Chancery Lane 'before Thursday' it would not be thanks to the City magnate, who, flurried and worn out by the unwonted exertion of running

about all night, had gone home 'to refresh himself,' leaving London to burn. The rapid spreading of the fire 'bred a kind of Distraction and stupidity in the Inhabitants and neighbourhood near it.' The pipes had been destroyed in a few hours, and the water supply, such as it was, failed entirely. Men were clamouring for Monk, but he was out of town the first days, and the fire was even more hasty and unreasonable to deal with than Saints and Levellers. 'Negligence,' says an old chronicler, 'turned into a Confusion, Consternation & despair, People chusing rather by flight to save their own goods than by a vigorous opposition to save their houses & the whole City.'

Friends wrote at first to tell each other what streets were burned down; then they count up 'those that are yet standing.' Dr. Denton writes: 'Whether this will find you or noe I know not because I know not where the carrier doth inne, the fire being now come as far as Holborn Bridge or near it. The short account of the fire is that more than the whole city is in ashes, wherein W. Gape & my selfe have great shares in St. Sythes Lane, and in Salisbury Court in reversion & I & wife in possession, & to render our condition more deplorable, the depopulation is soe vast that it cannot afford us a livelihood so that I want the advice of all my friends to advise what I had best doe. Our persons I thank God & our moveables are saved but at a vast charge, 4*l*. for every load to Kensington. The frendes in Chancery Lane are safe, but the fire was neare them behind the Rowles where it gott a great check soe that we hope it is stopt, I think they are still in towne. We had sent away all but my bookes soe that we were fayne to ly only on blanketts. It came so far as to burn the King's Bench office & the Alienation Office, but not so far as Nelly's chambers. Our Navy lies at St. Ellen's point & the Dutch on the Coast of Bretaigne. This fire stops all trade & traffique & posts, the sad consequences of which may easily be ghessed att. Since I writ this the fire broke out at the Temple again next to Nelly's Chambers, & his chamber the Duke caused to be blown up & it hath burnt now the Inner Temple Hall & I

have not heard how much further. . . . I give you many thanks for your invitation, but at present am in such a distraction that I know not how to make use of it, we are neyther safe here nor you there, for it is generally beleeved, but not at court, that the Papists have designed this & more, many & strong presumptions there are for it, as gunpowder, & balls & wildfire taken about many of them, that if they destroy them there are more left behind to doe the business; send them to Whitehall they are all dismissed. Here nothing almost is to be gott that we have not in possession, bread, bear, meat, all in scarcity & many want it. The fire broke out vehemently again last night about Shoe Lane, & as we ghesse about Cripple Gate, but we ghesse by the smoke that it is well-laid againe. I wish 2 or 3 trunks with you, but they are at Kensington & I know not how to convey them. . . . Just now Dick Parker is come from the Temple & saies that the Temple Hall is safe & only Tanfield Court burnt & the Church is safe. Harry went to looke for the Carrier without my privity, soe I am goinge myselfe to find him, for I dare not send a man out of doors for feare of being pressed to work att the fier, James & Jack were both pressed this morning.'

'Clothworkers' Hall is now on fire but in a fair way of being stopped. Justice Godfrey behaved himself so well at the Temple, that the King would have knighted him, but he refused it, so the King has ordered a piece of plate of 50*l*. for him with his arms upon it, & with ex dono etc. Betty Adams sent this day purposely to us to invite us to her if in distresse, & my Cozen Turbervile sent to proffer men, carts & horses. we are in such a confused condicion that we know not w^t^ favor of frends to make use of, though we have need of them all.' Sept 6, 1666.

'The very very sad misfortune of poor London is an unexspressable troble to us all,' writes Mrs. Elmes from Stanford; 'sure soe sad a sight was nevor seen be foare as that sitty is now lying in ashes, besides the unimmajanable loos the hole kingdom receives buy it.' Her own things have suffered much in removal, and those who have paid heavily for having their goods carried into the fields Sept. 8, 1666.

are half provoked when the fire stops short of their houses. Aunt Isham is terrified at the stories that reach her 'that there is dayly taking of Men, & some in Woman Clothes with fier bals.'

Sept. 7, 1666. Sir Nathaniel Hobart, when the panic is abating, feels that after all they have had 'no great share in this calamity otherwise than as it becomes christians to have a fellow-feeling for one another's miseries, yet the image of this terrible judgment has made such an impression in the soules of every one of us, that it will not be effaced while we live.' They are unable to accept Sir Ralph's hospitality, 'for the Term approaches & Parlament claims our attendance. We have the same apprehensions of future tumults, but we are in the storm & must ride it out, besides I must keep to my calling, for that you know keeps me. The Duke of Albemarle came this night to towne, happily if he had bin heere before the Towne might have bin saved, but God was not pleased, & we must submit to his will.' Lady Hobart adds 'when you com to us you will not know whar you ar,' so completely had the old familiar landmarks disappeared. Houses are at a premium, and the fire was hardly quenched when his landlord warned Sir Nathaniel out of his house,

Sept. 13, 1666. 'but I am in possession & intend God willing to keep it. . . . I told my wife what he would doe & so was not deceived, as soone as he shall seale a lease of Ejectment I will put in a bill in Chancery & get an injunction . . . he is a person so odious that if his cause were just he would hardly find favour. The King has forbidden any building till the Parliament sitts, the rebuilding of the Citty will not bee soe difficult as the satisfying all interests, there being so many proprietors. The great streights the Citizens are in, will not bring them to this end of the Towne. The Exchange is kept at Gresham College.'

The City is a desert, the physicians who practised there are flocking westward, where they find so many more of their craft bereft of patients, that they fear they shall be reduced to bleeding one another. Dr. Denton resolves, however, to bide his time '& try how practice will come in';

his wife has lost houses that brought her in 86*l.* per annum, 'and now she hath had a little time to recollect herselfe, she cryes all day longe. I shall take what care I can off her, but all in my power cannot make it good to her.' A deluge of water in the Fens was as destructive to his property there as the want of it had proved in town; but the pious Doctor thanks God for what is left: 'it pleases Him that we should live in a continual dependance on him, & I hope we shall do.'

A surveyor's report sent to Sir Ralph states that the fire burnt from 1 or 2 A.M. on the 2nd of September until the 6th, consuming 373 acres within the City walls and 63 acres 3 roods without the walls; 89 parish churches besides chapels, and 13,200 houses were destroyed. Aunt Isham writes of a hurricane near Lincoln in which the wind blew fifty houses over with 'Hay-ricks, Corn-ricks & all trees; hailstones fell as big as half-crownes & the inside was like to Butter vele & one had little things like maggets, thes be great Judments, the Lord make every one of us mend one.' After describing the desolate look of the country with all the trees by the roots, she says it was 'as naked a place as the Citie of London,' a surprising expression, until the date reminds us that the letter was written by an eye-witness during the month of the Fire. Sept. 26, 1666.

Cary is 'so trobled at the sad nuse of the distrocktion of Londone that I could not rit . . . you know it was all my sone had to depend on and my girls, so you may esely immagine my consarn, ther is bot one house left of 18 pound a yeare of all that nomber.' John Stewkeley writes later: 'In that sad & universall loss wee had no small share, but a patient resignation to his will that sent it, is the best mitigation wee can think of, either in that or other disappointments or crosses that your sister & I have undergone since wee mett together, which are all lessen'd I thank God, by our mutuall affection & injoying one of another & our young branches.' They were not idle words. Mun wrote of Stewkeley in his old age, 'He is so gay in his humour that he appears at least 7 years younger then his son Jack Sept. 26, 1666. Dec. 17, 1666.

& at least once & Twenty then his son Will,' whose 'gravity & reservedness' were of an unattractive quality. A family subscription is got up to restore Nelly Denton's chambers in the Temple, but the confusion left by the fire affects all trades down to the smallest; Sir Ralph can scarcely find a cradle for an expected arrival at the White House, 'such things being very deare now, as all their stores are burnt.' Had the fire reached the wig-makers, that a change of fashion was announced that autumn? Moll Gape informs her country cousins that 'all fals locks & foretops are left off, nothing but our owne haire worne now by women, but men will not bee brought to itt as yet.' 'Builders & tenants are to seek,' and by the autumn of 1667 'ground goes even a begging, & there is soe much to be sold that it becomes every day cheaper than the other'; even when tenants are found to build, they will pay no rent 'till Christmas come twelvemonth,' and 'Stewkeley must e'en be content with the loss that dreadful fire brings on him.'

CHAPTER XLVII.

JOHN VERNEY AT ALEPPO.

1662–1674.

JOHN VERNEY left England in 1662, prepared to take up with high hope and courage his post in the factory at Aleppo. The working partners of the firm were Gabriel Roberts in London, to whom John was still apprenticed; and, at Aleppo, his brother William Roberts, and John Sheppard (related to Jack's old friend Luce), a distant cousin of the Verneys.

Sir Thomas Bludworth (now remembered as the panic-stricken Lord Mayor of burning London, and as father-in-law of Judge Jeffreys) supplied the capital, together with Mr. Richard Spencer, Mr. Thomas Lewis, Mr. Sam Dashwood, and Mr. Jos. Hamond. 'Sir Thomas Bludworth is the great trader of them all and sends generally above twice as much as any of the rest, though Mr. Lewis is as rich as any.' The factory consists of some fifty Englishmen, among whom is 'cozen Dick Fust,' brother of Jack's school-chum, and another Buckinghamshire youth, brother to Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell.

The factories were known collectively as 'the nation'; there was an English Consul at Aleppo who had 'pre-eminence of all other Christian Consuls Resident,' and a Vice-consul at Scanderoon. The Levant Company sent out a chaplain 'for the instruction of our people in knowledge of religion, and in reproving and rebuking whatsoever shall deserve reproof or admonition': a commission which when literally interpreted caused 'discontent and disagreement between our Factors and our Chaplain,' to the great surprise

of the Company. A distinguished Oxford man held the post of chaplain at Aleppo for eleven years—Dr. Robert Huntington, a learned Hebrew scholar, who enriched the Merton and Bodleian libraries with Eastern books; but John Verney returned home soon after Huntington's appointment, and there is no evidence of their having met.

The Beaumaris merchant and ship-captain Lewis Roberts (father of Gabriel and William) has left an account of the city and its commerce as he knew them: 'Aleppo,' he says, 'called in 2 Sam: 8. 3. Aram Zobah, is now the most famous city in all the grand Seignior's dominions, for the confluence of merchants of all nations. It is pleasantly seated upon a plain, in the midst whereof doth rise a small hill whereupon is built a strong castle that commands the whole city. It hath in it many Khans for lodgings, and warehouses which resemble small forts, being shut with iron gates, to defend the merchants and their goods from wrong. Their streets are shut with doors every night at each end in the manner of Cairo, and thereby each street becomes defensible by itself.' The chief exports are 'Cotton and Cotton Wools, Galls for Dyers, Aniseeds, Cordovants, Wax, Grogram, Yarns, Chamlets, Carpets, Gems from India, Spices from Arabia, Mohairs & Raw Silks brought overland from Persia, and Goatshair.' The Company's ships brought in return the famous English cloth from Suffolk, Essex, and Gloucester; kerseys from Yorkshire and Hampshire; English lead and tin, and Indian spices and indigo which had first gone to London by the Cape.

'We lye in the open air in summer,' writes John, 'on the tops of our houses, and are often troubled with little flyes which sting our hands and faces'; and for the cold in winter he wants 'Wash-leather gloves to write in.' They rejoice when 'frosty and snowy weather' comes in October, because it kills the locusts.

The most pressing item in Jack's 'Note of Necessarys' is 'a Grey Beaver Hatt not too high crownd nor sharp crownd but Broad brimmd . . . for hats of 3*l.* 10*s.*, or 4*l.*, are sold

for 7*l.* 10*s.*, and as this, so all other necessarys, few or none weare any but beavers here to save charges, for one good hatt will last a man 6 or 7 yeares in this factory.'

His wants are generously supplied from home. Edmund sends him 'strings of all sorts for the Lyro Violl in 2 round black boxes to the value of 20*s.*, besides 5 bridges which cost ½ a crowne; also a crimson velvet saddle with a cover for it,' and a complete set of horse trappings: 'all as good as could be got for money.'

If John 'can light upon a well-tempered Turkish or Persian Scymeterre or Battle Axe, or Persian Bowe & Arrowes or such like Toyes,' Edmund would like to have them, and 'if the prices be too great for a younger brother to beare' he will repay him. He also desires to have 'some silke waskots & shirts of the sort of linnen made where you are, a Turkish habit from head to foot, but not of cloth, because that's too common here. Let all be neate & hansome, the Turbant cheifly. I am bigger & taler something then you, therefore bespeake it accordingly'; 'though your calling be not such as I did wish you, yet since it was your choice, swerve not therefrom, but withal remember you are a gentleman, and show yourself on all occasions to be a man of worth and courage.' But John was not long in discovering that something besides worth was needed to push his fortunes. His prospects were anything but brilliant. There was already a race amongst European nations for the commerce of the East. France with Spain was bringing cloth into the market, calling it Drap de Londres, and marking it with the names of English makers; and the Dutch were as unscrupulous in their rivalry. 'A man of warr of theirs,' Mun writes, 'went into the Redd Sea, and hung up English colours, and took all he could rap and ring from the Turkes wch incensed their Emperor highly, but by good fortune all was timely discovered so there was an end.' The Turkish Government itself was breaking treaties and ignoring pledges as it has continued to do ever since. 'Mr. Robert Frampton, the Rev: minister at this Factory,' is going to London to inform the Turkey Company of these things. 'Our Intrigues

May 1663.

Jan. 16, 1666.

now are with the greatest Courtiers of this Empire, And notwithstanding our Embassador's power we are likely to be foiled.'

The foreign competition and Turkish misrule which affected the prosperity of 'the nation' were less injurious to Jack than rivalries within the factory. Each man in it was playing for his own hand, and using any influence he could command in England to have 'the ventures' sent out to his own name, not to the firm. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Sheppard viewed John with jealousy as a coming partner, and the only commission allowed him was upon goods which Mr. Gabriel Roberts sent out.

This was not what Sir Ralph had been led to expect, when he paid a heavy premium for his son, and consented to so protracted a separation. Jack's chances now lay in the interest his father could make for him in England, and in the money he could send him, with which to make his own bargains. John was not a youth to sit still under disappointment. While he complained bitterly of the small profits of the work, he carried it on with his usual ability and diligence. He scrupulously kept to every rule of the Company, allowed himself no 'immoderate or unseasonable recreation nor suffered his business ever to be performed by others.' He thus succeeded in gaining 'Cozen Sheppard's' respect and good will; he would blush to repeat to his father 'those hearty expressions and praises' which Sheppard gave him in his report to Gabriel Roberts.

There was an occasional press of business, but it was on the whole a monotonous life, varied by the hundred miles' ride to Scanderoon, when John went down to meet an incoming ship, or to superintend the despatch of the precious bales brought by trains of camels to the sea. A ship's captain or a traveller with news from home was a welcome guest at the factory, and in the midst of the exciting changes that followed the Restoration, the young men laid bets on the fate of the fallen. 'Pray sir, when you honour me with a letter,' writes Jack to his father, 'advise me whether Sir Henry Vane by his death saved his estate or noe, or

whether his heirs injoy a half of it, I having a wager of 30*l.* to my 3*l.* of it.'

Jack had at last a pleasant distraction: 'On occasion presented in an idle time to goe to the Holy Land, halfe the factory did doe it, and among them myself.' Dick Fust wrote home that John had started 'with about 20 more Englishmen on the 19th of March, he took shipping in an English bottom for Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem intending to be back in May.' Dick very earnestly begged his father 'to furnish him to see the place also . . . it being the custom for most of our Englishmen that stay any time at Aleppo to see Jerusalem.' A relic of John's journey still exists at Claydon, in a parchment signed and sealed by 'Frater Bernardus Betuel . . . Custodiæ Terræ Sanctæ Vicarius' to testify that he had duly visited the Holy Places. 1663.

'Mr. Nightingale, the great factor at Aleppo, is coming to England suddenly, Mr. Sheppard may be the next Grandee.' Gamaliel Nightingale, Consul at Aleppo, was above forty years resident in Turkey and Persia. He died between Astracan and Moscow on one of his many journeys (1693). The Tsar and twelve of his nobles attended his burial.[1]

Jack warns his father not to send out money except through Mr. Gabriel Roberts. 'Mr. Fane (who dwells in our house) hath been nipt, his Father Sir Francis, gave 700*l.* to a merchant to be sent hither . . . but by that time the shipp sett sayle the merchant broke, a scurvy misfortune for a younger brother. I have received the periwig you sent me, and it fitts very well, but I have not had any occasion of one since its arrivall, my owne haire (which is extraordinary thick and curling) being now long enough without.' Dec. 11, 1663.

He sends home a small sack of melon seeds by his father's request, but he cannot get any choice kinds, 'for in this country among these heathens none are known, here they are not worth 12d a million.' Later he is able to get

[1] F. C. Nightingale, Esq., of East Molesey, kindly sent me this information.

some special melon seeds 'of Mesopotamia, where they grow in the sands of the river Euphrates after the fall of the winter overflowings, they are here much more esteemed than the mellons of this country. . . . Sir Thomas Lee of Hartwell hath some of the same sent him from hence.'

Five years go by of protracted negotiations; 'there are not three in the nation that spend so little,' yet John finds he shall be 'but upon a balance.' He cannot bear to trouble his father with 'craving petitions,' but he has times of depression when it is hard not to fancy himself forgotten.

In the summer of 1667 he has been two and a half years without news, though he gives repeated and minute directions about his address. Letters are to be sent 'via Marselia' and to be given in 'on a post night at the Outland post-house in the Poultry, London,' unless sent by private hand, but every way their delivery is most uncertain. Lady Elmes hears

March 24, 1666. 'strainge stories of the Jewse & amunge the rest that theare is 400 Profits at Alepoe, sure Jack will turne one, or att least wise send some newse of them.' Jack takes no interest in the prophets and is pre-occupied with the alarming accounts that had reached Aleppo 'of the late dreadful mortality in England'; he had been ill himself most of the previous winter, and he longed wearily 'for the very great comfort' of a letter from his father 'to be certified of your and my Relations health.' 'By this Ship Robert, I have ordered to

Feb. 20, 1666. be laden a Bagg of Excellent Pistaches for my Brother, but she is so little a ship it was with great difficulty I gott Mr. Nightingale, with whom you are acquainted, to promise me they should be taken.'

His position has not improved: 'Mr. William Roberts' pride & a stubborne will of ruleing' has made him refuse every scheme proposed to give John a larger share in the profits. He does not depend on the 'trade in shipping & Grosse goods . . . he hath all the yeare long great sums of money either from Constantinople, Leghorn, or Venice.' John is entirely dependent upon what his old master can do for him, 'who if God should take from this world I must return home, for a farthing more I should not gett in this

Country unlesse I had a good considerable estate of my owne to improve.' He hoped that Mun would invest 1000*l.*, for which John could get him a good return. When at last a budget of home letters reaches him, he is delighted to hear of the birth of an heir at East Claydon, but his father shows him that no capital is to be hoped for from there.

At length, John's patience is rewarded. Gabriel Roberts, March 1668.
'the only friend on whom his hopes depend in a mercantile way,' has arranged that he shall enter into partnership with Sheppard, he having four sevenths and John three sevenths of the profits. By great economy John has just paid his way, and has kept whatever money his father has been able to send him 'entire' as capital to trade with.

The father and brother at Claydon are equally unhappy at the long gaps in the correspondence; two at least of John's letters miscarried; and Sir Ralph wrote in anger, which was really anxiety, about his son's neglect. John is grieved to the heart, he apologises and explains 'pray in your next casheer these clouds by your act of oblivion for former manquement.' . . . 'Last June,' he writes, 'going to Jan. 18, 1669.
Scanderoon about business & staying there only 5 days I cacht—or rather Scanderoon disease catcht me—& continued upon me for 3 months, changing the collour of my flesh to that yellownesse, which is customary for that desease, & seldom ever after alters, though, thanks be to God, I am not only perfectly cured but have the same complexion I had before.'

John was full of eagerness to improve his new partnership, when an overwhelming calamity fell upon Aleppo. Those narrow streets with their teeming population were ravaged by the plague for four months. John could write in August that it was 'now nere over, but it hath swept away in Aug. 5, 1669.
this city 150,000 people, besides it hath raged in all the towns and villages about us. Most of our Nation fledd, 6 of us only remained here, of which 2 died of the infection. I was out of town a few dayes to despatch some business at Scanderoon, nere which place died Sir Thos. Lee's brother

of the Plague. I was in the tent with him, till the day before he died, not till then imagining he had that disease. I escaped yet more narrowly another who went out of Aleppo with me, & had the Plague on him. We did not only travell, Eat & Drinke but lay together, 2 dayes before he died, which was under my Tent, I began to mistrust him and left him when in bedd together. Of the Plague and that rascally Scanderoon desease which seldom proves less mortall, are dead 7 of our Factory this summer, which is twice as many as has died ever since I came here.' 'We have buried 5 more of our Nation, one fourth of the Factory are this summer dead, & most of the living have been sicke, among which I was a sharer for about 25 dayes . . . my respects to those of my relations that have not forgotten me.'

Sept. 9, 1669.

The winter season finds him more cheerful and able to think once more of his father's love of gardening. 'I send you a little sack of Berryes of a tree of these parts that groweth not in England. Its leaves are of an admirable green. The Blossoms (which smell rarely) of as good a Blew or darkish Skye collour. Its groth is to the bignesse of an Elme nere upon, it beareth nothing but these berryes which drop off in the winter, & are not of any knowne goodnesse, that its only a delightfull tree to looke on. If it will growe in our country I cannot but thinke it worth the having, if so be only for its rarity. 2 years since I sent you some seeds, if they produce good mellons I'le get you more from Mesopotamia whence I brought those, which though they are incomparably good, yet in 2 or 3 years groth in other parts change soe much, that they differ little from Cowcombers, as English Peas are worth nothing if every year we sow not those that come from Christendom for to sett them that grow here though their original be English, & but of two years planting, yet are they not worth the gathering, such difference there is between the soyles of Countryes.'

Jan. 30, 1670.

He spent a month in Cyprus in 1670, on the business of the Company. The following spring he wrote to introduce to his father 'one Thomas Rowland a ship Chirurgeon, who

March 25, 1671.

while he was at Aleppo favoured me with his good company in my house. He is Buckinghamshire born which adds to the respect I bear any Englishman. It's soe long since I heard from you that I begin to despaire of having the happinesse you formerly granted me by your dear letters. It is all one charge whether they consist of a whole or a quarter of a sheet of paper.' He makes a despairing appeal to Mun for tidings. 'I doe desire to robb you of one mornings pleasure or buisnesse, and to confine you to your Closet, there on a sheet or two of paper to muster up an accompt of all my relations, who and to whom any are marryed, what increase there is of our kindsfolke and what decrease by death; this with what enlargement you think fitting . . . I assure you will be very wellcome to one who of so many relations . . . in eight yeares time hath heard but of three or foure.' While John was eating his heart out with hope deferred, the packet of home letters which he longed for had left Claydon many months previously, and had been returned again from Syria unopened. It should have reached him the summer of the great plague, when there was but little intercourse between the ships and the stricken city. The packet dated June 26, 1670, found its way back to Claydon, where, strange to say, it remained with unbroken seal for 200 years. Sir Harry Verney's second son George (Colonel Lloyd-Verney) found it when cataloguing some old letters. It was solemnly opened in full family conclave on October 20, 1865, when the Claydon news which John had so pined to hear was read at last.

His own letters fared little better. He found one mail still at Scanderoon which he had despatched two months before: 'Our ships do not dare to depart for fear of 4 dogereens who lay at Cyprus threatening them.' The next packet sent by a French ship never reached Marseilles, being taken 'by the Tunisseens.' From August '68 to November '71 he has not heard from his father, and he fears that 'long absence and new kindred might in any other less generous spirit than yours cause love to faint and turn into remembrance only.' But John's place had never

Jan. 10, 1670. been filled at home. Cary Gardiner writes: 'Dear Nevegh, About All-Hallow-Tide I retorned from Claydon wher I injoyed much comfort in your Father's good company, who I never saw look better in my life then at that time only you ware mising to compleat our contint, wher you ware daly wished for and yr good helth perpetually dronk though not to yr Father who we did not love to discourse of you to, finding your absinc was a troble to him, who I hope you will sodenly come to see, which I am sure will joy his heart to look on . . . bot I wish you had atained to all thos advantages that Yr travel can ad to you, that you might retorn to thos relations that longs to see you.' Peg Gardiner, his playfellow in childish days, writes him an affectionate little note. 'Your wife presents her servis to you, but thinks you a little unkind in staying from her soe long.'

In 1672 John lost 'Foure hundred & odd pounds' which Gabriel Roberts had put out for him, and during the summer
Dec. 25, 1672. 'wanting business to imploy' him he had been 'voyageing to & fro the Country for severall months.'

Sir Ralph became somehow possessed of an idea which the imagination refuses to associate with John, that he was
May 6, 1673. neglecting his business at Aleppo for amusement. 'Were there any Pleasure in this country,' John writes, 'I had leasure enough to enjoy it for of Eleven years I have been in Exile, full seven of them have not brought me in imployment enough to reap my Expenses in meat, drink, and clothing, and for the pleasures I can't think of any, except riding twice a week (a little before sunset in summer) and that too is accompanied with such feares (and many times intreagues happen on it) that the edge of delight is quite blunted. Besides this delight is generall, for 'tis taken by the whole Nation who particularly dare not venture abroad.' A little later the eldest son of their chief partner Sir Thomas Bludworth had 'a miraculous escape' on one of these rides: 'being about 20 miles from Aleppo, a Gourdeen amongst the rocks, tho' several servants were with him, shot a bullet at him, & cut off the hair off the hinder part of his head.' To
May 8, 1673. Mun he writes: 'To satisfye you as to my return home,

I hope in 12 months to kiss your hands in England, where the surest Remora to stay your sons is a good inheritance, a thing most of my degree are by law and custom strangers to.'

On reaching London, John was received with much cordiality by his old master, now Sir Gabriel Roberts, and his wife, and the effect produced upon him by meeting old friends and relatives was to make him yearn for a home of his own after his long banishment. 'If ever I settle in the Aug. 1674 way of marriage,' he writes to his father, 'I am certain the first proffers are best & at a man's first coming from Turky, for then estates are least known and rumours run high.' Sir Ralph agrees with him 'that young Marchants have the best offers when they first come over,' and John is soon approached in the City by a Mr. Edwards who has a marriageable daughter aged about 19. 'He is a widdower upwards of 60 and saith will never marry againe, a friend of mine who hath knowne him many years tells me he is a very honest man, and that his dau^r is a good housewife, never bred to Playes nor Parkes, but a sober, discreet & godly young woman. . . . For Mr. Edwards his birth, I know not what 'tis but a plain man he is, & his dealing is in Cloth w^ch possibly may be of good advantage to me in his advise and skill when I buy that commodity, he is no shop-keeper but lives in a little house in Basinghall St. & will take a bigger as he finds one commodious for him. He hath given his son 2,500*l.* to trade with. By the fire of London he is the worst by 10,000*l.* as he told me, yet he is a rich man computed worth 10,000*l.* so that if I can skrew him up a little higher I know no reason, if the match be consonant to your will but that I may have her. One thing more Mr. Edwards told me that is this, his daughter (he said) brought in no kindred with her, neither of great persons to be a charge by way of entertainment, nor of mean to be a charge by way of charity and their needyness.'

Mr. Edwards has a good many questions to put to the 'young Marchant,' but John declines to enter into any details on his side until he has had some chance of making acquaint-

ance with 'his Daughter never by me seen.' Mr. Edwards
Aug. 20, 1674. 'at last agreed to walke his daughter the next morning in Drapers' Garden, where with my master I met them and continued walkeing together nere two houres, this was done that I might have a sight of her to see if I found nothing disgustfull, but we interchang'd not one word with her, only my Master asked her 3 or 4 questions, for 'twas agreed on, that all should be as by accident & he s^{d} he would not acquaint her with the reason of his walking there—but we are at liberty to believe him. Now it remains on my part to give her a visitt, w^{ch} I intend to do in 2 or 3 days, to let them see her Eyes have not quite dazzled my reason, & truly tho' her beauty is not like to preferr her to the title of a Duchess, yet she is a very passable woman & well shapt, & shewd herselfe without any artificiall gracings, save that her Gowne & petticoates were all new; but her head was not in the least adornd for a surprize, w^{ch} I liked ne're the worse, for in Turky we say, If you want a horse buy a lean one, & then you'll see what fatness (that creature's ornament) would have hid from you, but to leave this ayry way of writing, wch I hope (since I beg it) you'll pardon—the Gentlewoman is a passable handsome woman, & her father able if he be but willing to give her money enough.'

The ladies of the family, when John puts off his return to Claydon, at once conclude 'twas courting some woman hindered him,' and Lady Hobart 'put her little ingions in the fire to see if she could discover any such thing,' but John 'stands on his guard against her Female Politics,' hopes she may enjoy her own visit to Claydon, and begs his father to let his guests know that 'our Turky ships from Smyrna left Leghorne the 23rd of July soe that in 10 dayes they may be here, 'tis true I am not concerned on them but this may serve as a putt off when anyone talks of my not visiting you.'

Sir Ralph responds affectionately, offers to relieve Jack of his horse, and reminds him that Cousin Jefferyes has a daughter whom he might have inquired about, before concluding the treaty with Mr. Edwards. He begs him to find

means to convey ten pounds to Tom in Ireland, 'but write not in your owne hand for he will haunt you eternally with letters of request if he finds that you have any hand in it.' 'As to my Coz Jeffereyes daughter, I knew not,' Jack replies, 'whether there were such a creature in being . . . but if his friends will propose certainetyes, I'le step downe to see her, I think she lives with Coz: Will: Sheppard, but I suppose old fox Dormer (no friend to our family) is the axeltree on which that fortune depends, and I fear his terms at first or last by way of settlements will be as hard to me, as his love to my brother.' He has paid one visit to 'Madam Edwards' and means at his next 'to acquaint her with (what she knows) my arrant.' He has 'verbally agreed' with her father about her fortune in great detail, even to the accommodation the old man is to give them in his house, 'he hath but one room that he can spare and if his son bring home a wife then we must jogg out.' 'This is not amiss,' he concludes, after summing it all up, 'considering if withall I marry one that hath no father, her cloaths at wedding, etc. must all be paid out of the portion, & some people require so much expense in wooing & treating, carrying up and down to playes, etc. that tho' they bring more smoake yet (in the end) there is less roast found.' Sept. 3, 1674.

John's views of marriage at this time certainly befitted a man 'newly come out of Turky'; and it is a relief to find that these elaborate bargainings came to nothing. He had failed to fall in love, and he fell once more to business; eight years were to elapse, till in middle life John met his fate, and yielded to the spell of a love as true and tender as Sir Ralph had ever felt for 'that incomparable person, Dame Mary of blessed memory.'

THE WHITE HOUSE, EAST CLAYDON

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SQUIRE OF EAST CLAYDON.

1665–1677.

'I BEELEEVE you know that Capt: Blarkes is dead. His company was in Alisbery, & Burnham Hundred, certainly hee died of Fatt, for hee would not bee perswaded to rise early, nor to use much excercise, nor to drinke any thing but New Beere, soe that hee was growne very Bigg, & choaked; the Surgeon assures me all his parts were very sound, & that hee verily beeleeved hee died with Fatt, hee being between 30 & 40 years old. If you know any gentleman that does the very same thing in all points, I wish you could prevaile with him to doe otherwise, least hee kill himselfe by it':

thus did the anxious Sir Ralph preface a moral lecture to his eldest son on his 'ill howers, greate Lazinesse and general course of Liveing.'

The good-humoured and incorrigible Mun was wont to join a little grimly in the laugh against himself; 'I am weary of this deepe Dirty Country life,' he writes on a wet November day, 'for want of such a strong Horse as I may depend upon; yea 'tis safer for mee to foot it, then to Ride any Beast of an ordinary Strength, Neverthelesse that is More irksome & dismall to mee, then all the Irish Boggs or Lincolnshire Washes, for I can never Walke, but I sinke so deepe in the Earth (such a heavy Burthen thereof am I growne) that it puts mee frequently in mind of Korah's, Dathan's, & Abiram's Fate: soe that without the Convenience of a very lusty Good Horse, I am like to stick fast in this Ugly Clay.'

He is a big, tall man, weighing twenty stone at the age of thirty-seven and growing heavier, but he has a certain air of refinement which marks his foreign training, and a wider acquaintance with the world than the country squires about him. He drinks French wines at home, and is not of those who conclude the evening repast under the table. He acquires a slouching gait as he grows older and stouter, and he can only get on his heavy boots now with 'much ado & great helpe.' His tailor is constantly rebuked for not taking sufficiently ample measurements. 'My Coate is too scanty in the circumference, a fault a man should not have committed that had ever seen me.' He wears a large grey beaver hat with a loop and button on one side, and a knot of ribbons to match the colour of his suit, where the brim is turned up. He orders his 'stirrup thredd stockins' from the hosier near St. Dunstan's Church; they are to be of a 'bignesse & length wch is greater than ordinary.' Mary Verney is tall too, but very slight; we hear of a 'black thread bodice she wears at home' and of 'ribband Knots for her head of sky collor, or yallow, to go with it.' When Mun wishes to pleasure his wife he has a pair of stockings made for her in 'very fine worsted, the colour

of scarlet Bow-dye, as good as can be gott, The Feet must be very extraordinary smale, but the Leggs must be very long though very little likewise.' He also buys her 'a twelve penny Black Orange Necklesse.' He is very particular about his sword and 'his carabine, his pocket-pistols and screwed pistols,' and has a suit of light armour, though the fashion of wearing it has almost gone out. He plays the lute and guitar, and has generally a book on hand; the story of the Siege of Buda, the last French treatise on the Art of War, Mr. Dryden's Verses, besides sermons, political squibs, pamphlets, and News Letters which come down by carrier. On his study table there is 'a very little brass mathematicall instrument about the length of a Pen to draw lines with ink, & also an Ebeny Ruler.' He writes excellent letters, keeps copies of them, and dockets those he receives. But while sharing many of Sir Ralph's tastes, he fails where his father excels, in the management of men and in the maintenance of his personal dignity. His disorderly household is the constant theme of local gossip. Nurse Curzon, his head servant, is 'old, crazy and decayed, and hath more need to have one to look to her, than to look after others.' The village nursemaid has been chosen, in Sir Ralph's judgment, 'very unadvisedly, & tis greate odds his child would be changed for one of the Nurse's Sister's children.' Every one about him imposes upon his good nature; entangled in a network of debts which he puts off or ignores, his rents are in arrears, his horses fall lame, and when the ill-written letters his man sends out in his name are complained of, he replies with a shrug of his broad shoulders, that it is as impossible to make the man a better scribe as to wash a blackamoor white. The lads in his employ turn out no better. 'I caused my little boy Thom: Warner to be whipped againe this morning for more ffaults then this sheete will containe viz. Picking Pockets, opening Boxes that were lockt, Picking locks, Stealing, Lying, &c.'

Will Stewkeley, the scapegrace of the family, manages these things better than Mun. 'I wish Will good luck at Brackley,' writes Sir Ralph, '& am glad hee made soe much

advantage of my gelding, Had I a very good Horse that I loved, I had much rather sell him to him for 50 Pounds, then to you for 4 score, for he delights in a good Horse, & takes pleasure to improve him, by his constant care, and kindnesse, and on the other side, you would contrive all imaginable wayes to spoyle him, by Marketing, Dungcarting, carrying Double, & w^ch^ is worst of all, by sending him on Idle Errands, with Idle, ignorant Fellowes, that have neither care, nor skill to ride him, tis true you allow him meate enough, if your men doe not forget to feed him, as they alwaies doe to shoe, wash, or Dresse him, all this beeing true (and a greate deale more) what comfort could I take to see a poore creature that I Loved, soe miserably spoyled by you that ought to preserve him—Enough of this (and too much too) for I am sure you will never mend it.'

Mun pays Cousin Woodward a visit to arrange for his wife's confinement: 'touchant une sage-femme nous parlâmes de cette demoiselle Kent, ce Quaker de Reading, et elle la loue grandement, d'être tres habile dans son art et le mesme faisait aussi la vielle dam^elle^ Woodward, laquelle fut, il n'y a gueres, dans un lieu ou ce Quaker exerçoit son office, & elle dit qu'elle n'avoit jamais veue une si cognoissante & adroite sage-femme, et que chascun se croit bien heureux s'il peut l'avoir, & qu'on luy donne 20*l.*, 10*l.*, et au moindre 5*l.*, pour sa peine, & que cette femme ne veut rien prendre des pareins et mareines, & qu'elle ne se mesle jamais à parler de religion a ses patientes, qu'elle eust esté la sage-femme de la Reine, & que si elle promets de venir qu'elle est parfaitement fidele à sa parole.' Mun finally decides, however, on religious grounds, not to engage the clever Quakeress. Mary is in better spirits when she has a baby to look after, and takes pleasure in the adornment of the cradle and the 'peecushion.' She wears a 'white satin Mantle' for the christening of her little Ralph, a white satin waistcoat, a white summer gown lined with white silk, and a white mohair petticoat, all of which Aunt Elmes has ordered in London; there is also a fine white mantle to lay over the head of the cradle, and a smaller one to

match, to wrap the child in when taken out, or to form a quilt.

But happy days such as these were too soon overclouded, and Mary's fits of madness made the house at times almost unbearable, though in her worst attacks she was more amenable to her husband's influence than to any other. He was assiduous in his attendance upon her, and was nervously anxious to conceal her condition from outsiders. When in health she was gentle and amiable, full of sympathy for her poorer neighbours, and she was still 'my beloved wife,' and 'my darling Moll'; but at other times his bitterness of soul overflowed in letters to his father. 'Ma Femme n'est constante que dans ses humeurs et chimères opiniâtres fantastiques et inconstantes.' . . . 'Ma Femme est tellement perverse et outrageuse que je suis tout a fait las du lieu ou elle est.' He is up with her night after night, no soldier in a campaign gets less sleep, while he complains that he reaps none of the honour which at least rewards the soldier's toil. The poor woman takes knives and scissors to bed with her, and, in default of instruments of offence, swallows her silver thimble and a piece of glass. She assaults her husband with blows and kicks, and with a torrent of bad language which hurts him much more; he is afraid to leave her with her maids as she might injure them, or with any other man lest he should use the necessary force with less than the necessary gentleness. When his father implores him 'not to tie himself to so strict an attendance,' he accepts an invitation from Sir John Busby to go out hunting with him, and to dine at Addington. On his return he finds the house upside down, the maids crying and screaming, and his wife's hands bleeding from her successful efforts to break every pane in the latticed windows. On calmer days Mary haunts the churches and churchyards, and must have been no small trial to the preacher on Sundays. When Mun takes her to Middle Claydon, she waxes restless under the number of headings to which Mr. Butterfield's texts lend themselves, and goes out of church, but just as the worthy divine is reaching the application, she comes in again

to wander round the font and distract the attention of his hearers.

Mun is tormented by the infallible cures recommended for her; and 'would go from Dan to Beersheba to get her ease' though nostrums abound at his own door. The tenant of the Lawn Farm, Widow Scott, boasts of 'a secret powder that sends people to sleep for 3 or 4 days and nights in succession, after which they awake cured.' Old Judith is sent for, and her master conjures her to tell him 'whether she uses any manner of Charmes, Sorceries, or Magic whatever,' but she 'giving devout assurances to the contrary,' is allowed to try her experiment, 'which is only the head of a Jack Hare, wrapt in something, & hard bound about the Patient's Head for 3 or 4 days & nights together, and then to be taken off and put into the feathers of a pillow whereon the partie grieved must lye as long as they live.' Mun asks 'What sympatheticall vertue there may be in a melancholy Hare's Braine to draw away all Melancholie out of that of hayre-brained People?' but he adds 'it would be very pretty if so slight a thing should cure.' The woman desires Mary 'should be prayed for during six Sundays successively,' and Mun arranges 'to send bills to some by-church remote from all her relations, That a Person of condition who labours sorely under a melancholy distemper desires the prayers of the congregation,' but so sensitive is he on this point, that 'the partie' is to be nameless. Jan. 30, 1671.

His steward Dover combines many confidential duties, including a little desultory teaching of the children, and a godly discourse on Sunday. The old Vicar, Maurice Gryffyth, resigned in 1663 and by his will ten years later left money for the education of East Claydon boys. His successor, the Rev. Hugh Hart, complains from the pulpit that his wife beats him, and is so far indisposed that he has to be revived with brandy. Dover is considered by the churchwardens to be a valuable stand-by.

Mun has found a man of similar gifts as a tenant for Sir Ralph's farm 'Stopp's Bargain in Middle Claydon, by name Teagle.' 'If honest Mr. Butterfeild Be disabled through Jan. 7, 1678

Infirmity from Officiating, or that his sonne cannot Be Heard, He can Preach very audibly unto the Parishioners, though He Doth not care to do it in a Roome with a Steeple, yea & I am credibly informed that He is a Better Preacher then Mr. Rushford; I tooke notice He was Highly delighted to see my Man Dover who is a Brother Teacher in my ffamily; so that our two Parishes will Be Happily provided with Godly Speakers, who can Hold fforth so powerfully to y^e^ People.'

During the first years of their marriage Edmund hardly ever left his unhappy wife, but as time went on her malady seems to have taken a gentler form, and she was content to remain at East Claydon, while he spent 'the Terme' with Sir Ralph in London. Dover kept him informed of the minutest household details, and his master writes him long confidential letters, which he forbids him to show his mother, 'who is a Sieve.' 'There be a Many Cheif in my family, so you shall tell me How many or wch of them you conceive most lavish, & then I will order my admonition accordingly with circumspection that nothing may be ill taken from you.' 'You must not deny my wife at any time she is well, such a paltry sum as 1*s.*, to play or divert her at cards.' Dover sends up snipe and other game. Edmund desires him to pay for 'a Partridge 8*d.*, Larks & other small birds as Buntings, Fieldfares, Thrushes or Blackbirds (wch I value equally with Larks) 6*d.* a doz. & no more, for I can buy them so here, even multitudes,' though larks sometimes go up to 18*d.* a dozen. He sends his wife oysters from London, and returns a cloth 'with spratts in it for my family.'

A serious household complication arises when 'a Painter, one Harris,' employed in the White House, falls in love with Mary's favourite maid Jane, daughter of Matthew Avery of Quainton, and 'his Brother a joyner that wainscotted Mrs. Verney's Chamber entertaynes the like Passion for the same Party; the Party hath noe love for either of the brothers, but they are both unfeignedly in love with the party.' Edmund, possibly to make a diversion, asks leave for the painter to go down to Claydon House, to copy some of 'the Peeces' on

the walls; and when Sir Ralph not unnaturally demurs, Edmund assures him that he does 'not desire that the Painter should Meddle wth any of Van Dykes Pictures: But That you Would Be pleased to Graunt Him Liberty to Coppy S^{t} John Baptist, Landskips, and Night Peeces Here, where I'll assure you grand Care shall Be Taken of Them.' Pretty Jenny finally makes choice of the genteeler brother, 'the Art Man,' and George Harris carries her off to Oxford; a year later her death is announced in her twentieth year.

Mun has visions of a waiting-gentlewoman, 'some discreet sightly body,' who shall exhibit, on a salary of 30*l.*, virtues seldom seen in combination. She 'must not be young nor Hansom,' yet so well bred as to go with Mary into any company. When Mary is capable of giving orders the waiting-gentlewoman is to efface herself, at other times she is to curb the domestic expenditure, and guide the unruly team, without offending either the lawful driver or the driven. She is to make the master of the house comfortable according to his own views of comfort, and she must neither interfere with his habits nor gossip about them. Such a Phœnix, it would seem, existed only in the family crest, but Mun, and even Sir Ralph, sought for her in this wicked world with much faith and persistence. One maiden lady after another, whose cackling and fluttering were suggestive of a much homelier fowl, tried her hand at the work. The letters abound with her provocations and good intentions, and it is hard to say whether she gave more offence to her masters or to 'Nan Roades and Betty the Cookmaid,' whose 'cousins' made themselves much at home round the great open fireplace in the kitchen. When the gentlewoman's reforms, upstairs and downstairs, threatened to become intolerable, she would be summarily dismissed for what Mun called her plottings and intrigues against him, but being soon recalled by his remorseful good nature towards a poor relation, the tears and the quarrellings would begin afresh.

The children who are 'very hopeful' are their father's chief consolation, Ralph (b. 1666), Edmund (b. 1668), and Mary (b. 1675). But as 'the two little Esquires' become

more and more capable of mischief they add heavily to the burdens of the waiting-gentlewoman as soon as their father is out of sight. Even his threat 'to be about their eares when he comes home' fails to secure that they 'stirr not abroad without Cosen Bestney's leave.'

Little Ralph 'is very Briske, Lively, & full of Mettle,' but at ten years old 'he doth not mind his book and hath profited nothing since he went to his Master, tho' the Child hath parts enough to Learne, he requires more paynes to be taken wth Him then many & his Master hath such abundance of Scholers that he hath not Leisure.' 'I know,' writes his father, 'that Rome was not Built of a Day, yett mee Thinkes some little Matter might bee done towards it.' Baby Edmund draws Cousin Parkhurst's little girl as his valentine, and she wears his name in large letters; Mun is puzzled to know what present he should give to such a tiny sweetheart.

April 28, 1679. A sadder widower than Sir Ralph, he has to supply the place of both parents to his little ones. 'Mis wants a nupper Coate,' his servant writes by his desire to a relation, 'and I have heere Inclosed a measure taken by a Tayler. She also wants a Petty Coate or too, and a Copple of frockes, my m^{r} Understands not the fashones of Coller or stuff Therefore he Leaves those things to you, but he doth not think Silck so Proper for soe Little a Child, and therefore is unwilling to goe to the cost, he soposes Tammy or sum such kind of stuff most fitt for her and Genteele, my M^{r} desires you to Enquire what sort of Linen Sutes such Children ware and send him word.' He is very sensitive to kindness shown his little Molly; she has an 'historical pack of cards' sent her as a Christmas present at the discreet age of four, when Lady Hobart describes her as 'handsome & witty,' and she is credited with still more severe tastes at seven years old.

Dec. 25, 1682. 'Madam,' Edmund writes to Aunt Sherard, 'My daughter, y^{r} goddaughter, rec^{d} lately a noble present from you, a payre of sylver candlesticks, a curious fine Bible, & the whole Deuty of Man as fine, most Excellent and Best of Bookes, w^{ch} I Have charged Her to Reade & studdy carefully

& seriously with a gratefull Remembrance for ever of yr Ladyship, whose good and kind Designe for her welbeing in Giving These Things is apparent as well as yr generosity and Though she cannot yet write you her Thanks for Them her selfe, neverthelesse she Doth it now Here by my Penne, wch We most humbly Beseech your Ladyship to accept and Beleive that She Hath so much of her ffather in Her that she will bee, as I shall bee while I Breathe, Madam, Yr most perfect Honorer and humble servant.'

Edmund Verney holds his Court as Lord of the Manor of East Claydon, and attends the Sessions regularly and the Assizes. He has generally a law-suit in hand about boundaries and rights of way with the neighbouring squires, whom he considers 'very malicious & stomachfull,' when they disagree with him. To prevent Mr. Chaloner making 'an Inclosure' he buys up half a yard of land in Steeple Claydon at a high price, and 'the Halfe Cowes Common,' that he may be able to sell it again very dearly, if he should hereafter 'find cause to consent to the enclosure of the Common.' He is seen at militia levies, county elections and race-meetings, and—when he can find a horse to carry him —in the hunting field. He is a pillar of the Church, and prosecutes poachers and dissenters, as in duty bound, but he signs the Presentment of Papists and Nonconformists 'very unwillingly, hating to do anything like an Informer tho' never so legally.' He farms some of his own land at a loss, opposes the importation of Irish cattle with other squires whose estates are in 'the breeding counties,' entertains his neighbours with a lavish hospitality that he can ill afford, and generally supports the character of a country gentleman of the period.

Mun had never the strength of will to take his own line against his father's wishes; he had been absolutely dependent on Sir Ralph for money, and he was such 'an ill husband of his ressources' that his marriage with an heiress had not mended matters. Sir Ralph had been unwilling to let him become a soldier or sailor, or to pay his election expenses when he might have entered Parliament,

so he had some reason for the complaint he made as a youth, that his father would have him waste his life because he considered it a sufficient profession to be an eldest son.

Mun looked forward vaguely to his succession to Claydon, as a time when he would pay his debts and shake off the evil habits that were growing upon him; but no one was more truly anxious that his father's life should be prolonged, or more desperately unhappy than he was, when Sir Ralph was menaced by any ailment.

His life, though ill-regulated, was not a useless one; he was always doing kindnesses, and Nancy's nickname for him of 'Noble Soul' was generally current in the family; but he was stung at times with a sense that he was fitted for better things than he either attempted or achieved.

Mun's attention to the older members of the family made him a favourite with them all. Aunt Isham, who had played an important part in the lives of the young Verneys since their grandfather's days, came to Claydon in the summer of 1667. Her husband had given up the house at Wheatfield, near Thame, which they rented from the Tippings; their only son Tom was at Merton College, and about to be called to the Bar, and for a time the old couple were without a home. 'Jugge' was so intent upon 'Pannie's' health (to use the familiar nicknames they never lost), she took scant notice of her own, but she was failing fast. Margaret Elmes, who was at Claydon, nursed her tenderly, and Sir Ralph made careful lists of her little bequests, which were many. Her ample pockets abounded with dainty implements; 'my little silver grater and my silver measure' are left to Sister Sherard, 'my diamond Bodkin to Mrs. Elisha Tipping but first put a stone in it,' 'To Mrs. Nancy Tipping my silver forke and my little gold ring with a posie Ever Constant; To Mrs. Victoria Tipping my best Peticoate; To my neece Nancy Nicholas my Haire Knot made with her father's and my husband's haire.' Lady Tipping desires to have her Herbal. There are several bequests of plate, and of her 'pictures in little,' one of Sir Edmund Verney is left to 'Neece Adams,' and one of Dr. Denton to his wife. The

relations are so distressed about her, they long for letters '& yet dread to open the next.' She died at Claydon House. Sept. 20, 1667. Margaret Sherard, who considers that next her husband she could have no greater loss, thanks Sir Ralph for his 'great kindness to hir sister; she wanted for nothing that either phisition or friend could assist hir in. . . . God I hope will be a Comfort to her good blind Husband as she youste to cale him.' Dr. Denton writes: 'She lived & dyed a good Xstian and the best of us can doe no more.' She was buried in the beautiful Church at Hillesden where she had worshipped as a child, and where a monument is still eloquent on her merits: 'Pia Mater! Certa Amica! Optima Conjux!' The Church porch at Sandford-on-Thames also speaks for her.

'Eliza Isham, 1652.

Thankes to thy charitie, religiose dame
Who found mee olde and made mee new againe.'[1]

'Pannie' survived her but two years and a half, and is buried at Wheatfield; her son, who died in 1676, aged thirty, lies beside her at Hillesden.

The members of a former generation were falling quickly one after another like a group of battered elm trees, and the most striking figure among them was cut off in the spring of 1668. Dame Ursula Verney belonged to an older world; married some seventy years before, in Elizabeth's days, she retained the grand manner of her time, and her end would not have been unworthy of the Tudor queen.[2] Her sharp tongue had kept relations at a respectful distance, and there were times when she was abandoned to the society of her parrots, but her numerous kindred gathered round her death-bed: 'Lady Hobart & 2 daughters, Pen Denton, & Mar- Feb. 1668. garet Elmes, Cousin Turvill, Lady Oakeled, Mrs. Betty Clarke, Lady Knightley & all her own family.' She had

[1] I am indebted for this information to Dr. Osmund Airy.

[2] There is a prescription among the Sloane MSS. in the British Museum of Dr. John Metford of Northampton 'Pro illustri Domina, Domina Verney octagenaria,' between 1652 and 1655.

bitter memories of Claydon: of her strong-willed mother, who had schemed for her so unhappily; and of the magnificent Sir Francis who had married her in childhood, and abandoned her as soon as they had both reached years of discretion; this she marked by not leaving the worth of a pair of gloves to Sir Ralph or his heir, nor a penny to the poor of the parishes whence her dowry had been so long derived. She desired on her death-bed to alter something in her carefully drawn will, and in presence of the awe-struck circle she gave her commands. The lawyer, pen in hand, listened obediently; her mind was clear, her will imperious, but the rattling in her throat made her vehement speech unintelligible, and so she passed away. Sir Ralph, who as the head of the family had constantly provided his old kinswoman with venison in obedience to her commands, was punctiliously anxious under the circumstances to show respect to her memory. His horses were 'out of tune,' but Mun provided a team; his wife seems to have accompanied them, and they drove together the long miles to attend Dame Ursula's funeral at Albury, where so many of their ancestors were already buried.

There was a constant interchange of civilities between Claydon House and the White House which must have laid a heavy tax on the smaller household. 'This day wee dined with your Brother,' writes Sir Ralph to John, '15 of us at our Table, and 11 servants, in all 26 persons, and truly wee were very plentifully provided for, my Cooke did it, and there was noe want of any thinge.' Nancy Nicholas remarks: 'I pety y^{r} pore Squire to have 26 persons to din w^{t} him, you move like one of y^{r} Armis of Caterpilers & so maney of y^{ou} have such good stomaks y^{t} I fancy y^{u} devoer all y^{t} is set before you.' Nancy, in spite of her gibes ('the Foole of the Family' as she calls herself), dearly loved to be included in Sir Ralph's large parties. 'The Gallery Chamber,' he writes to her, '& the little inward roome to it (wch were formerly Aunt Ishams quarter) are much at your service: the little wanscoate next it, is for another & I hope my friends will bee content to crowd togeather both at Bed &

Board. Another time (when fewer meete) they shall lodg with more conveniency.' There were worse times still, when friends arrived at Claydon House to find Sir Ralph absent, and came on 'to the poor Squire' for a night's entertainment and the loan of his coach and horses. Sir Roger acknowledges 'the most easy conveyance' they gave him to my Lord Saye's. Another day 'Mr. Thos. Wharton passed by with my L^d^ Colchester in his Calash drawne by 6 horses, & my L^d^ Ossory went thro' nobly attended.' Sir Richard Temple alights and stays till the moon is up. 'My Lord Latimer's trumpeters' come from Buckingham 'on a begging complement,' and sound '3 or 4 Levites and as many points of War' in return for Edmund's largesse. So absolute are the claims of the most distant cousins to the hospitality of a country house that when Mun is unwell himself, and has decided 'not to keep Christmas,' he consults his father as to whether there is any polite way of declining a noisy party of youths who announce that they are coming from town to spend that season with him. Sir Ralph ponders the question, but writes at last, 'How to put off these young men is utterly unknown to me.'

Aunt Abercromby had lately died, and her son Jaconiah, with the blood of the truculent Scotch trooper in his veins, was a hard nut for the family to crack. They desired to pack him off by subscription to his kindred in Scotland, though they frankly said Jamaica would be better; he had a knack, like Tom, of coming back again from everywhere. Aunt Sherard expressed herself bluntly: 'My oppinion is y^t^ all is cast away on him; he was a brewte to his mother and I believe nothing will thrive with him except he repent of that.' Sir Ralph and Mun contributed to a fund from which Uncle Doctor helped him, keeping a tight hand on the purse strings. One summer evening, Jaconiah took his cousins at East Claydon by surprise, as Mun informs Sir Ralph.

'Vendredy environs dix heures du soir vint icy Abercromy avec un Compagnon, qui avait la vraye mine d'un Filou, si jamais j'en vis Un; c'estait un Noiraut environ de 34 ou 35 ans, June 6, 1670.

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